

K O S A T O ,

THE BLACKFOOT RENEGADE.

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AUTHOR OF "SILVER-KNIFE," ETC.

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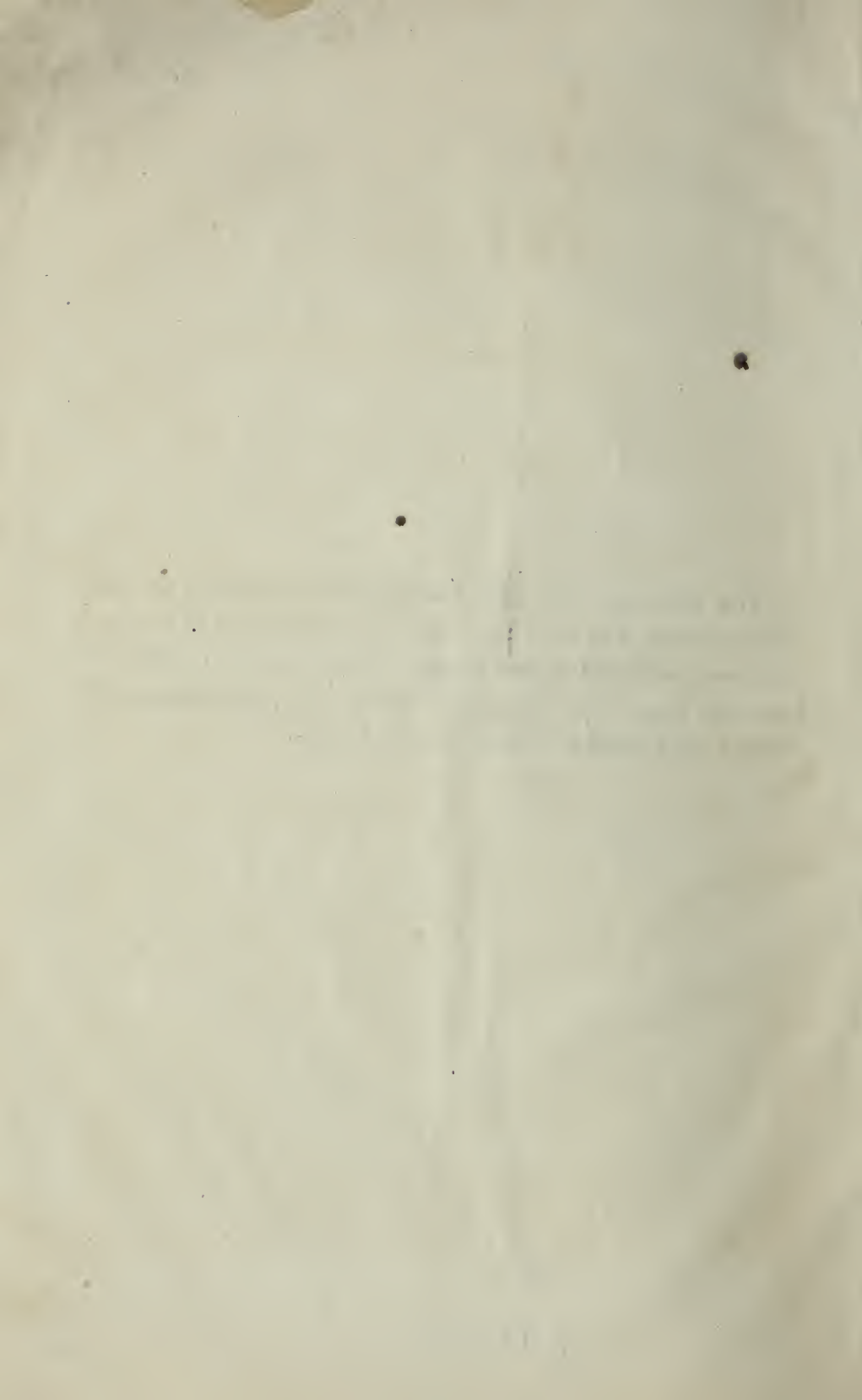
English

23723 Woods

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# KOSATO,

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### PROLOGUE.

GG I KNOW what you would tell me," said Meridine, mournfully, as I approached him. "But I will spare you the pain of speaking. I know all."

"Would to heaven that you did!" I replied; "but that is impossible. Prepare your mind for the worst. Hear the sad news I am about to communicate, with manly fortitude. Do not let the blow crush you."

"Look at me, Malcolm. Do I look like a man to be easily crushed? Think you that I will not, or have not, struggled with grief with all my strength?"

"I know you are every inch a man, Meridine," I answered, as my eyes wandered almost unconsciously over his noble proportions, "but there are rude winds that prostrate the stout oak as well as the tender sapling."

"Am I prostrated with the weight of my griefs, Malcolm? Do I look worn and weary, like one who mourns without consolation or hope?"

I fixed my eyes steadily upon Meridine. His strange language alarmed me. I began to fear that his intellect was disordered, but his manner was calm, and no strange fire lighted up his dark eyes.

"You would tell me that Emile is no more. I know it, Malcolm; she died three months ago, while the hands upon the dial indicated the hour of twelve."

"Meridine!" I exclaimed, in astonishment.

"It is true," he replied, solemnly.

"But when did you hear the news?"

"The very hour of her death," answered Meridine, in a whisper which awed me.

"You were two thousand miles from the death-bed of Emile."

"I know I was, Malcolm."

"Who, then, told you? Consider what you are saying, Meridine."

"She told me—Emile," he replied, in a low, yet emphatic voice.

"My poor Meridine! you are mad," I answered, as I turned from him and wiped the from my eyes.

"Mad, Malcolm? O, no! I am rational and calm. My reason never sat more firmly upon its throne. Emile has been with me. I have felt her presence by day and by night. I have heard her voice; her hand has been upon my brow. It is very sweet to commune with her. She elevates my thoughts; she makes me stronger and better."

"Meridine, let me entreat you not to give place to these wild fancies. Arouse yourself, and shake off these idle vagaries."

"Malcolm," replied my friend, almost sternly, "cease to speak to me thus. I am in perfect health, both mentally and physically. My pulse beats evenly and well. The doctrine of communion with the spiritual essence of the departed may be a novel one, but I have long believed it; and the ancients did not reject it. At this very moment, I doubt not, the spirits of de-



ceased friends are near us, and hear the words which drop from my lips. They fill the air—they see, they hear, they touch us with their shadowy hands; and I thank God that it is so.

"But think you they ever assume a tangible form, or speak with the voice of the earthly born?" I asked, while a strange awe insensibly crept over me.

"They do," he replied, without hesitation, and in a tone that left no doubt in regard to his sincerity.

"And have you seen Emile?" I asked, much wrought upon, despite my efforts to appear otherwise.

"I have seen her, and *painted* her."

"Good heavens!"

"Here is the proof of my words," continued Meridine, calmly, drawing a miniature from his bosom, which he pressed to his lips, and then placed in my hands.

It was indeed the likeness of Emile—but it was no common one; the lips seemed ready to speak, the eyes to see, the cheeks to glow with life, and the whole stood out from the glass as though traced in living fire.

"Is it like what your sister *was*?" he asked.

"Wonderfully, wonderfully!" I replied. "It only wants life to make it her in reality. The very dress she wore last!"

"Yes, I know it, and meant it should be thus," rejoined Meridine. And then he added quickly, "She left a letter for me, and you have brought it."

"I had not forgotten it; it is in my pocket."

"She wrote it the day previous to her death," resumed my friend.

"She did," I replied, still more astonished at the remarkable knowledge which he displayed. Without further reply I gave him the letter. He pressed it to his lips, and then placed it carefully in his pocket without breaking the seal.

"Why do you not read it?" I asked.

"I know its contents," he answered with a sigh; "I know its contents well."

"And you were two thousand miles away when it was written, and the seal is unbroken!"

"Very true. Here, take the letter, if you

doubt me—break the seal and read while I repeat the contents."

I did so, and Meridine recited the contents *verbatim*.

"DEAR EDWARD,—When these lines reach you, the hand that traced them will be pulseless and cold. I am sick and dying; and O, how fervently I wish you were near me to hear my last prayers for your happiness, both in this world and that which is to come! If it can give you any pleasure to know that I have loved you truly, be that pleasure yours. If there is a future life, and the spirit has free power over its motions, you shall never, never be lonely. I will be near you by night and by day. My presence shall not be terrible. I will whisper in your ear, and it shall be as if an angel spoke. I will touch you with my hand, and it shall be like the soft dews of the morning. I will be to you as the cloud and the pillar of fire, to guide your devious footsteps. I believe in the communion of spirits now, but I did not formerly. The night before I was taken ill I shall never forget; I was warned; the coming event threw its shadows before—full upon my pathway. It was the hour of sunset. My sister and myself were seated in the parlor, and its sole occupants. I had been playing some lively airs upon the piano. Having wearied myself with the performance of one or two difficult pieces, I locked up the instrument, and seated myself near Margaret. I remember perfectly that I both shut and locked the piano. It was very light in the room, for the rays of the sun still lingered in the western skies. Our backs were turned to the instrument, and we were talking earnestly.—Suddenly the apartment was filled with the most entrancing melody. We simultaneously turned toward the piano. Good heavens! it was open—the keys were in motion; but the performer was *invisible*! For a few minutes we listened to the most heavenly notes that ever fell upon mortal ears. My feelings I will not attempt to describe;—they surpass the power of human language. Who was the musician? you may ask. Question the *angels*, not *me*. I heard the bewildering strains, I saw the keys move, but the hand that swept them I saw not.

"Before this letter reaches you I may have seen that hand, and heard anew the music it has power to awake. This is not fancy, for Margaret was with me, and will attest to its truth.

I knew I was *called* for when I heard those notes; but I felt no fear; I was raised far above it. An inexpressible calmness pervaded my soul—a calmness reaching to the very climax of sublimity.

"When the music ended, in a low, lingering murmur of seraphic sweetness, I sank into a chair and wept. The next morning I awoke with a burning fever.

"I am dying; but death is no longer terrible. If I die, I know I shall live again. \* \* Do not weep for me, Edward; we shall meet in a better land. \* \* \* \* \*

"Yes, there is a spiritual life! 'Tis a glorious thought. Even I may become a ministering spirit to the heirs of salvation. Perhaps I may become the guardian angel of Edward Meridine. \* \* I am weary, and can write no more. I shall never hold the pen again—the moment of departure is near. Farewell, Edward, and may God in his mercy bless and make you a happy and useful man—the last wish and prayer of your

"EMILE MALCOLM."

"Do you longer doubt?" said Meridine.

"I know not what to think," I replied, greatly perplexed and wrought upon.

The death of Emile had taken place three months before, while Edward Meridine was at Fort Walla-Walla. The letter he had not seen, as it had never been out of my possession for a moment. How, then, had he obtained knowledge of what had transpired at Memphis?—Who could answer? I could not; I knew what he had told me, and no more. I was speechless with amazement, it is true, but the solution of the mystery I leave for others.

Having read the foregoing, the reader will be able to understand the following chapters.

## CHAPTER I.

### AN UNPLEASANT SITUATION.

**I** WAS encamped in a deep and thickly wooded dell, near the head waters of Ice River. On either side, high mountains reared their cloud-defying heads. Large rivers and small streams with difficulty found their way into a more open and less broken country, through lonely passes and rocky ravines known and accessible only to the forest-born, or the daring foot of the hardy free-trapper.

I had wandered many weeks in that wild and savage region. I had dared its gloomiest solitudes, and scaled its loftiest cliffs. I had not turned aside for red men and beasts of prey, and I had met both. But I had not exposed myself to danger and hardship without an object. I will not pause now to explain my purpose to the reader; all shall be made tangible as I proceed. I will not attempt to conceal the fact, however, that my mind was overshadowed with grief and melancholy, and that I valued life but slightly. Had existence been precious to me I should never have had this history to write, for few men not actually weary of living would have thrown themselves boldly into a country infested by the most savage tribes of Indians that traverse the wilderness.

Hitherto game had been abundant, and I had not found it difficult to supply all the demands of appetite; but for the past few days I had seen no signs of buffalo, or other game, and as I seldom prepared anything for future use, I began to be in want of the common necessities of life. My ammunition was also exhausted, the last charge of powder and ball being then in my rifle. I was far from any civilized beings who could or would supply my wants, Fort Walla-Walla being the nearest trading-post.

To a man who felt himself bound to the earth by strong and endearing ties, this would have been certainly a dismal prospect; and even to me, as misanthropically as flowed my blood, it was far from cheering.

But I am not a man to be discouraged when aught depends on my own exertions; difficulty and danger give me strength, and my position must indeed be perilous when I cannot modify the adverse circumstances by which I am surrounded.

I resolved to meet boldly the difficulties which now presented themselves.

Without food I could not lead the wandering life that suited my mood, and without ammunition how was I to procure the flesh of the buffalo, the deer, or the mountain sheep?

Already I felt the gnawing tooth of hunger, for I had fasted twelve hours, and during that time I had traveled many miles over prairies, across hills, and through lonely gorges in the mountains. My faithful steed, exhausted and covered with foam, was feeding near me, in not much better plight than myself; but his troubles



would soon be over, for the banks of the river were green with grass of a luxuriant growth.

My horse turned loose to help himself, my arrangements for camping were soon made; for I had learned from the free-trappers, as well as by experience, that the most simple preparations were the best in a country where white men are considered lawful prey.

The slight shelter, designed more for protection against the night dews than for anything else, being completed, I shouldered my rifle and walked away in quest of game.

It was one of those mild, still days in August, when there is not a breath of wind afloat. The sun was at that point in the heavens which indicates that but an hour more of daylight remains.

With considerable difficulty, for I was weak with long fasting, I clambered from the bottom of the dell, and gained the higher lands that hemmed it in. From the elevation which I had now attained, little could be seen save the rough sides of the Blue Mountains, the summits of which were lost in clouds. Look upward which way I would, naught but wild mountain scenery met my view; while down below me were valleys, gorges, running rivers, and ravines.

The Bannecks, Eutaws, Shoshonies, Shoshokoes, Skynses, Flatheads, Nez-Perces, and occasionally predatory hordes of Blackfeet, frequented these sterile regions as hunting-grounds. Here also came the white trappers, during certain months, to take peltries.

Was to those so unfortunate as to be surprised by the Blackfeet warriors; and they sometimes were, in spite of all their vigilance.

I strained my eyes in every direction, but saw no signs of game. I put my ear to the ground and listened; the neigh of the elk, and the lowing of the buffalo, I heard not. Disappointed in my expectations, I began to ascend the mountain at the base of which I was standing, in the hope of getting a shot at a species of mountain sheep called the Big-horn or *ahsahita*, which frequent those latitudes.

As I was urging my way upward, a deep, low, threatening growl arrested my steps. I had reached a small spur of the mountain covered with a stunted growth of shrubbery, with here and there a small pine or sycamore, to relieve the monotony. I glanced warily about me to

learn whence the menacing sound proceeded. I could see nothing to excite alarm. I made a few steps forward, when my ears were hailed a second time by the same ominous growl, and it was nearer and more distinct than before. I knew it could not proceed from a wolf, for wolves are cowardly, and run at the first approach of danger. The animal that flies not from the presence of man is to be dealt with with caution. Directly before me was a birch of considerable size. I stepped a few paces to the right in order to look beyond it.

As little as I cared for life, and as worthless as the world seemed, a feeling of dread crept over me as I perceived, full in my path, at about the distance of twenty yards, a grizzly bear of enormous growth. He stood in a defiant attitude, and greeted me with a growl of still fiercer meaning. I had presence of mind enough to meet his eye boldly, without any signs of shrinking. He regarded me with a cool, inquisitive look, by no means satisfactory, and putting forth a large, red tongue, tasted my flesh and blood in perspective. My position was a most embarrassing one. To fly would be folly, to fire would be the signal for my destruction; for what is a single rifle-ball in the shaggy hide of a grizzly bear? My only safety, then, was in maintaining my ground, and looking Bruin out of countenance—certainly a very discouraging and unpromising task, in this case.

How long this conflict of the visual organs would have lasted I know not, had I not felt myself touched softly upon the arm. I turned my head slightly, wondering who could have approached me so silently. No one was in sight. I was still alone, and no human being was near.

How I could have fancied, at that moment, that some person touched me, I cannot conceive; but such was my momentary conviction.

A movement on the part of my antagonist called back my attention to him, and as my gaze wandered to meet his once more, they fell upon a painted face, and eyes that glittered like a serpent's. I comprehended the extent of my danger at once. The red visage was that of a savage, but of what tribe I could not then determine; nor did it matter much, so long as it was obvious that his presence boded no good.

If I escaped the teeth of Bruin, I was doubtless fated to fall by the hand of the Indian.



Here was indeed a dilemma which required much coolness and considerable philosophy. To be eaten by the bear was at variance with all my notions of "coming to an end," and to be scalped by a savage was equally repugnant to my feelings; for I had a mortal aversion to the free-born rovers, of whatever name. In my dealing with the red-skins, I had experienced but little save treachery and deceit; although, in one or two instances, I had been befriended by the Shoshonies and Skynses. To determine what course to pursue was the work of a few seconds only. I resolved to give the savage the benefit of my last charge, and take my chance with the bear, let the consequences be what they would. I raised my rifle slowly and leveled it at Bruin, who testified his disapprobation of the act by a threatening display of teeth, and sundry ill-natured snarls.

During this movement I was careful to keep my eye on the Indian, who, perceiving that I was about to fire, stretched his long neck from behind the tree that concealed the greater part of his body, to watch the result, anticipating, unquestionably, rare diversion. In his eagerness to see the sport, he stepped entirely from his hiding-place. Now was the favorable moment. Wheeling suddenly, I brought my rifle to bear upon him, and fired.

The Indian staggered a few steps and fell.

The bear reared savagely upon his hinder feet, opened his mouth to a frightful width, and emitted a long, angry growl.

Dropping my rifle before the smoke had ceased curling from the barrel, I grasped the lower branches of the pine which I have alluded to, and climbed with such vigor that I was soon perched upon the highest limbs capable of sustaining my weight.

This demonstration on my part put Bruin in a towering passion. Two or three clumsy bounds took him to the foot of the tree, the bark of which he tore off with his teeth, while with his sharp claws he tore up the earth, and sent the dirt rattling among the leaves.

I began to congratulate myself on my lucky manœuvre, while Bruin began to climb the pine. This put a new face on the aspect of things, and I ceased to glory in my good fortune. But my enemy was a little out of his sphere at this business. He was too heavy and clumsy an animal to climb a tree, like the common black

bear, and the limbs would have prevented his ascent even if he had had sufficient agility to climb at all. So after making himself ridiculous for some ten minutes by his awkward exertions, he desisted, and laid himself quietly down like a dog, beneath the tree, as much as to say, "I'm in no particular hurry; I can eat you just as well in the morning, and I dare say my appetite will be better."

I now considered myself in a state of siege, and never was a poor fellow in a worse condition to sustain a siege than I. I had neither food nor water, and if my adversary kept his ground, I should eventually be obliged to capitulate, and, in fact, surrender unconditionally, trusting wholly to the magnanimity of my conqueror.

I disposed of myself as well as I could amid the boughs, expecting it would be my lot to pass the night there. The rays of the setting sun gilded but faintly the mountain peaks. The owl had already commenced his nightly hootings, and the dismal notes of the wolf went echoing through the darkening gorges. The stillness of the air was broken by gentle sounds from the west, that put the leaves in motion, and made a mournful sighing through the trees. These sounds, coupled with my own unpleasant situation, awoke no comforting reflections.

But all these things were disregarded by the besieging party. He seemed measuring my size and weight, and calculating how long I might last with careful economy, providing he took late breakfasts and hearty dinners. Not sympathizing greatly with the *gastromancy* of Bruin, I turned my eyes toward the spot where the Indian had fallen. From my elevated position I could see him distinctly. The wound had not proved mortal, and with much exertion he had succeeded in raising himself from the ground, and getting upon his hands and knees.

With a slow and difficult motion he dragged himself along, the blood oozing from a wound in his chest at every effort. The object of this movement was soon obvious. Near the foot of the tree where he had been concealed lay his gun, and, he was working himself gradually towards it.

What if he should have life and strength enough to reach it? Would he shoot me or the bear? Having a knowledge of Indian charac-

ter, it required but little shrewdness to determine this somewhat important question. He would follow my example—leave Bruin unmolested, and shoot me as I had shot squirrels in my boyhood.

I had a good opportunity to observe the motions of the wounded savage, and I did so with feverish interest. Every inch of ground he went over cost him a pang. Fierce hate and intense pain were expressed upon his face with an energy I shall never forget. Once he paused, and the agony that shook his stalwart frame, I flattered myself, was the last struggle of his robust heart with death; but it was not so. Resting upon his knees, with tremulous hands he unloosed the girdle at his loins, brought it upward over his chest, and drew it tight over the wound, to stay the bleeding.

There was something sublime, yet terrible, in the strength with which he conquered his pain to perform this operation, in order to treasure each sand of life for an act of vengeance. At first he seemed a little faint from the effect of this rude application; but the momentary sickness and dizziness of the brain, produced by the sudden staunching of the blood, passed away, and he appeared stronger and more dangerous than before.

Lost to everything but the one thought of vengeance and the torture of his wound, with his burning eyes fixed intently upon his charged weapon, he wormed himself along and reached it. He threw back the lock, took off the old cap, and replaced it by another; this done, he attempted to lift the gun to his shoulder, but he could not; his hands were too weak and unsteady to hold it.

The disappointment consequent upon this discovery was terrible, and he gnashed his teeth in the fury of his rage. He now worked his way close to the root of the tree, dragging his gun after him by the muzzle. When he had reached the spot that suited best his purpose, he stretched himself on the ground upon his face, and with considerable labor placed the barrel of his piece upon a small limb about two feet from the root of the tree.

His grim features, despite the pain he suffered, lighted up with fiendish joy. I endeavored to screen my body behind the trunk of the pine, but it was impossible to protect one part without exposing another. I had already fastened my-

self to a stout limb by means of a leather strap I wore about my waist, so that if I were mortally or dangerously wounded, I should not fall and be torn in pieces by my choleric friend beneath. All I could do now was to "stand fire" as best I could.

The idea of a tumble of some twenty feet, and the reception I was likely to meet with after my advent, filled me with emotions far from enviable, and such as I sincerely hope the reader may never experience. I like a joke as well as any man, and can give and take one with tolerable grace; but to be shot like a barn-yard fowl by an Indian, whom I had considered "as good as dead," and then to be eaten (without sauce) by an ill-tempered beast whom I had never seen before, struck me as being a very beggarly, absurd, and scurvy joke. To suppose that my mother had reared me for *such* an end was an insult to my better feelings and my pride! But a truce to pleasantry on a subject like this.

I felt that my hour had come, and saw no possible means of averting my fate. I saw the Indian adjust his piece most carefully, and take deliberate aim. I looked to see no more; but screened my head as well as I was able behind the tree. A moment of breathless silence followed. The wind seemed to die away, and the owl and wolf ceased their clamor. The Indian fired, the bark and splinters flew about my head, and the ball grazed my right temple.

I was not so ungrateful and sick of life as to be unthankful for this escape, and I doubt not but I uttered some words of heart-felt thanksgiving.

Relieved of a dreadful anxiety, I turned my attention once more toward the savage. He was glaring at me with the malignancy of the fallen one himself, and with a trembling and eager hand commenced reloading.

The sun had set, and pale twilight prevailed. I now hoped that it would be too dark for him to see me before he finished the—to him—painful and laborious task of charging his gun; or that his fast wasting energies would fail altogether before he had accomplished that object.

Old Bruin had started up at the sound of the discharge, uttered a few discontented growls, and then quietly resumed his former watchful attitude.

The shadows of night fell rapidly; but through the darkening atmosphere I plainly saw the persevering Indian pour the powder into his



brawny palm, and thence into his piece, then place a ball upon the muzzle and attempt to drive it down with the "driver;" but his strength did not seem equal to the task, and when the dense darkness finally hid him from view, he was still laboring with the feeble remnant of his powers to send the bullet "home."

## CHAPTER II.

### MERIDINE.

THE night that ensued was to me a long and cheerless one. Sleep I did not wish to; but before morning my drowsy eye-lids closed, and my imagination ran wild in dreams, not much preferable to a waking state.

It was broad daylight when I awoke. Bruin was no longer in sight, and had probably thrown up the siege. The Indian's gun, ball-pouch, and powder-horn, were lying on the ground; but I looked for his body in vain. I reconnoitred carefully, fearing the absence of the besieging party might be merely a *ruse de guerre*; but seeing nothing to justify this suspicion, I descended. I found my rifle where I had dropped it after firing my last charge. I now walked to the spot where the savage had fallen. His gun, which proved to be a smooth-bored rifle, lay upon the earth with the rammer in the barrel, and the ball about one-third of the way down. The powder-horn and ball-pouch I took possession of without ceremony, believing they would be more useful to me than to their former owner, whose lifeless body I doubted not I should find in the vicinity, unless he had been dragged away by the bear.

Loading my rifle, I followed the blood-spots which marked which way he had gone. I was somewhat surprised after going some distance, at not finding him. He had evidently crept away on his hands and knees; and the leaves were stained with blood. I kept on, and traced him until I reached the *Fourche de Glace*, or Ice River, a distance of half a mile, when nothing more could be discovered. Believing that he had thrown himself into the water in order that his body might not be eaten by the bears or wolves, or that he might not lose his scalp-lock, I tried to dismiss the subject from my mind.

Long fasting had made me intolerably thirsty. Lying down upon the verdant bank, I drank deeply from the waters of the river. Somewhat

refreshed, I sat down to reflect on my situation and future prospects.

But a short time had elapsed before my meditations were disturbed by the sound of approaching footsteps. I arose cautiously to my feet, cocked my rifle, and looked about me for the intruder.

A man was just emerging from the dell, leading a horse by the bridle. One glance was enough to assure me who came. It was Edward Meridine. It had been several months since I had seen him, or known aught of his fate. His hair had grown long, and his beard swept his bosom. He was a man of most powerful frame, well formed, and attractive in his manners and conversation. His features, if not really handsome, expressed true native nobility of soul.

"Is it possible that I indeed behold you!" I exclaimed, as I walked joyfully towards him, and grasped his hand.

"It is very possible, Malcolm. I knew your were in trouble, and hastened to your assistance," he answered, with a melancholy smile.

"You have not spared horse-flesh," I continued, pointing to his panting steed.

"Poor beast! I have tasked his metal to the utmost. He must rest," said Meridine; and disencumbering him of the saddle and bridle, he suffered him to go at large.

"You have fasted twenty-four hours, and must be hungry," he added, abruptly, as the noble steed shook the foam from his sides, and walked slowly away.

I started at this unexpected announcement, and turned pale.

"If it is now eight o'clock, it is precisely twenty-four hours since I tasted food."

"You fired your last charge of powder last night; but you made a bad shot."

"That's true enough," I replied, with affected indifference.

"You lodged in a tree, Malcolm."

"Yes; but for heaven's sake how did you know it?"

"The Indian was bent on your destruction; the ball grazed your temple."

"Unaccountable man!"

"Bruin got tired of waiting for you to come down. If you had had a brace of 'six-shooters' like these!"

"I could have annoyed him, at any rate."

"Who touched you upon the arm?"

"Meridine, you make me fear you. All you have affirmed is true. You make me tremble."

"Malcolm, do not be so weak as to imagine I have made a compact with the enemy of souls. I confess a better influence—a more glorious power."

"My dear Meridine, beware! There is a boundary between this world and the other which must not be passed. To deceive a soul like yours, the Arch Fiend might transform himself into an angel of light."

"Not so. Lay aside such absurd notions, and make your heart clean to receive the truth. Man knows little of the world he lives in, but he professes much wisdom. He talks wisely of causes and effects, things of which he knows as little as he well can. He talks of *spirit*, and he talks of *matter*; but his deductions are false. Spirits, he says, are made of *nothing*; not understanding that there are different kinds and qualities of material—fine and gross; the first being distinguished by the name of *spirit*, and the latter by the name of *matter*. He conceives that a spirit having no substance can have no power."

"Do not perplex me with theories; give me facts. All you say of spirit and matter may be true enough, but I cannot understand it. Such speculations amount to nothing. I can conceive that there is no such thing as *nothing*, but that everything must be made of *something*; but what does that prove or disprove?"

"That there are gradations in matter, and that kind must have affinity with kind. A human being has an affinity or relationship, both to *this* and the spirit world, being composed of that fine material known as *spirit*, and of that grosser material known as *matter*. Dare you say that that immortal principle shut up in the brain, known as mind or soul, is not the same essentially that exists in the spirit world as an immortal being? and if the same in *kind*, why should not one *influence* the other?"

"Do not confuse me with argument upon this topic; it is, to me, darkness confounded. Tell me rather, how you knew I was in danger."

"But will you believe me when I tell you?"

"I will strive to; but I will not promise."

"I see a half sneer on your lips already, Malcolm. Well might He who was "a man of sorrow" complain of the world's unbelief. If one came from the *dead*, who would hear him?"

Well did He know the hearts of men. The *dead*—so called—come to us daily and hourly. Their immortal essence floats in the air, and they often breathe their low-whispered spirit-tones in our ears."

"But is not this a fearful doctrine?"

"Fearful? O, no! It is heavenly; it is glorious."

"But how would the human mind be affected by this intercourse?"

"It would be elevated, and made better."

"Are there bad spirits also?"

"There are, I doubt not."

"Then they may do us mischief, and make us worse instead of better."

"Most people believe in the existence of a devil; but does that belief render them less like God, or more like the devil? Is it not our duty to shun one and cleave to the other?"

"Of course."

"Then seek no sympathy with bad spirits—the dwellers in the lower spheres. Fix your thoughts on the good and the purified, and there will be no affinity with that which can lead you astray."

"But do you still believe that you have thus communed with Emile?"

"Seoff at me if you will, but I answer firmly and truly, I *have*. Have I not already given you convincing proofs of the possession of knowledge derived from some medium far beyond the common resources of man? Answer me."

"You have certainly surprised me beyond measure. But speak to me of Emile."

"Dear, blessed spirit! I could talk of her forever. But I must not forget that you have fasted for twenty-four hours."

"My hunger is half forgotten already. You see I have kindled a fire while we have been talking, and now while I roast this delicious buffalo tongue which you have brought me, do go on, and I will listen."

"This is a subject that must not be talked of lightly; it must be treated candidly, reverentially. He who would meet the departed on the confines of the two worlds, and communicate with them, must not expect to do it with a coarse jest upon his lips, or with his heart full of cursing and bitterness."

"Meridine, I shall begin to think you are in earnest," I said with a smile.



"I am deeply in earnest," he replied, seriously.

"But who touched me upon the arm last night?" I asked, somewhat excited.

"Whose hand should it have been but the hand of her whom we loved."

"That is too much, Meridine. It surpasses belief!"

"It may surpass *yours*, but it does not *mine*. You have read of guardian angels in the Bible?"

"O, yes! I have."

"If you had not felt that hand upon your arm, you would not have seen the savage; you would have discharged your piece at the monster before you, and the next moment the Indian would have sent a ball through your body."

"I fear you will make me believe in spite of myself. Say no more now, I beg of you. We will resume the subject some other time. I must reflect—I must sleep."

### CHAPTER III.

#### KOSATO.

HAVING satisfied the cravings of hunger, I spread my blanket upon the ground, laid myself down, and slept several hours.

It was past noon when I awoke. Meridine had been out, killed a buffalo, and had just returned with the hump.

"I think it will be unsafe to remain here long," he observed, when he perceived I was awake.

"For what reason?" I asked.

"Because the Indian escaped."

"Impossible! He threw himself into the water."

"He floated down the river in a birch canoe, and is alive at this moment."

"What makes you think so?"

"From certain marks upon the bank of the river," he answered, evasively. "He will be found by his people, and they will seek you with all possible diligence. It will be hard to elude them if they once strike our trail."

"Very true."

"What tribe did you think he belonged to?"

"I thought him a Skynse, or a Banneck, but I was by no means certain."

"He was neither, Malcolm. He belongs to a war party of Blackfeet, and is the son of a chief of consequence. He and his warriors have left

the main body of their people to distinguish themselves by some daring adventure on the war-path. They are all young men, and wish to be called the "bravest of the brave." Those of the party who take a scalp, or a prisoner, will take a wife immediately on their return, which event will make an occasion of great rejoicing. So you perceive that we stand but a poor chance among these fellows, who are stimulated by ovc and heroism."

"But how have you learned these particulars, Meridine?"

"I have been reconnoitering while you slept. The party is encamped about a mile down the *Fourche de Glace*."

"Did you learn their numbers?"

"Fifteen, precisely."

"Can we fight them?"

"Impossible. Don't think of such a thing. To meet them would be an act of fool-hardiness which would result in our destruction; and you must indeed be weary of life to wish to die by the hands of such barbarians."

"I am with you in all things, except your Swedenborgian notions," I replied with a smile.

"If you say fight, I will fight; if you say mount and be off, I'm in the saddle. It makes but little difference to me whether I fight or fly."

"I know you are a brave man, Malcolm, but you must not throw away your life foolishly. Remember your friends at Memphis," answered Meridine, warmly.

"I have escaped so many times, I begin to imagine that I bear a charmed life," I returned, laughing.

"One needs to bear a charmed life to live in *this* country," said my friend, carelessly, as he lifted the saddle to his horse's back, and buckled the girth.

These words had scarcely passed the lips of Meridine, when, as if to verify them, the crack of a rifle was heard, and a ball went whistling by his head, lodging in the trunk of a cotton-wood just beyond.

"That was a bad shot if aimed at *me*," he said, coolly.

At that moment a deer rushed past us, ran a few yards, and fell dead.

"That shot was intended for less noble game," I replied.

We were not kept long in doubt. A tall, dark figure emerged from the cover of a large

growth of sycamores. He was much above the medium size, erect and symmetrical. His bearing was bold and lofty; and though his features wore the red hue of the forest-born, they were noble, and at the same time frank in their expression. He was not one to be seen and soon forgotten. His dress, though without foppery, was in the most elaborate style of savage costume.

He wore a kind of hunting-shirt of dressed deer-skin, ornamented in front with embroidery of porcupine quills, the handiwork of some Indian beauty. The usual covering at the loins reached quite to the knee, and was curiously fringed, as were also the leggings. The moccasins were ornamented with bead and quill work in the prevailing mode.

A hatchet and hunting-knife hung at the belt about his waist. In his hand he carried a rifle of large calibre and elaborate finish.

When he unexpectedly discovered two white men so near him, he cocked his rifle, and scrutinized us suspiciously.

Meridine made friendly signs to him, and throwing aside all show of hostility, he advanced without any signs of fear.

Approaching our fire, he lighted his pipe with great gravity, smoked a whiff or two, passed it to us, and we puffed away for a few seconds in silence.

"Are your people encamped below?" asked Meridine.

"Their fires are blazing at this moment on Snake River," he replied.

"You are a Blackfoot?" continued Meridine.

"The Blackfeet were once my people; but they are my people no more. I left them many moons ago. I killed their chief, and they thirst for my blood; they would drink it up as they would drink water. I am Kosato, the Blackfoot renegade."

"And the Shoshonies are your adopted people?" added Meridine.

"Tis so, and my heart is with them."

"Fifteen of your former people are encamped on the *Fourche de Glace*, a mile below us."

Kosato turned a searching look upon Meridine, and pointing significantly at the ball-pouch and powder-horn which hung at my side, answered slowly,—

"Then my white brothers should be in the saddle."

"We were getting ready to be off when your last shot lodged in that tree."

The Indian looked at the wound in the cotton-wood, saying,

"Deer running very fast when I fired."

"But he was mortally wounded, notwithstanding. You will find his carcass yonder," I replied.

"I hit him first fire—had long chase," said Kosato.

After some further conversation it was agreed to join the Shoshonies at Snake River. With them we should be safe, comparatively, from the vengeance of the Blackfeet.

Mounting, we followed the renegade, who offered to guide us, and whose horse was grazing not far distant. He was soon astride his high-mettled animal, and we were moving along at a pace as rapid as the inequalities of the ground would permit. It was quite necessary that we should leave that neighborhood, for reasons already known to the reader.

I had now ample opportunity of studying the noble figure and princely bearing of Kosato. He sat his horse with the free and easy grace of a cavalier of the olden time. There was a manly dignity also in all his movements that could not fail to be observed.

"The name of this princely savage is not new to me," said Meridine. "I have often heard his heroic deeds talked of by various Indian tribes. He is cool and intrepid as a leader, and mighty as a warrior. His single arm alone strikes terror to the heart of an enemy. He is persuasive in council, eloquent in speech. He is the only warrior who can incite the forbearing Shoshonies to resent the bloody incursions of the Blackfeet. His wife is an Indian beauty, and was formerly the wife of his chief. His love for her drew down the anger of the latter, and he was insulted and degraded. No longer able to bear his wrongs, he slew his chief and left his people forever, with the woman of his choice. Since that time he has cherished the most hostile feelings towards the Blackfeet, and the latter have not been slow to return his hatred. Kosato has had many miraculous escapes, and his life is sought with the most persevering zeal. Though a dangerous enemy, he is a firm and generous friend, and I am glad to make his acquaintance."

"You make him a hero," I answered, struck with the earnestness of Meridine.

"He is a hero, Malcolm, and I doubt not that we are destined to know more of his character before we leave these wild regions."

"Perhaps I shall turn historian, and write his history after my return to Memphis; but I shall hardly dare write all the strange notions of my friend Meridine. People like 'tales of marvel,' but they are slow to credit that which conflicts with all their preconceived notions," I replied, satirically.

"I could have spared you the trouble of telling me that," said Meridine, calmly. "Men and women are apt to treat lightly that which has not happened in their own experience. How many persons disbelieve the tale of Jonah and the 'great fish,' simply because they have never seen a fish swallow a man."

"And the story of Samson and his family of foxes, I imagine, fares but little better," I returned, laughingly. "But seriously, Meridine, if you ever return to the habitations of civilized men, I earnestly entreat of you to remain silent on the doctrine of the influx of spirits. If it be true, the world is not yet ready to receive it, and the simple belief of such a theory would be sufficient to attach undying ridicule to your name."

Meridine smiled sadly, and made no reply. Reining up his horse, he fell into the rear, and we went forward in silence.

Leaving the valley of the Grand Pond behind us, we traversed a region rough and mountainous, seamed with frightful chasms, and rendered almost impassable by towering cliffs. But Kosato knew every pass, and his eye was familiar with the intricate defiles.

Emerging from one of the latter, more dreary and dark than I can describe, we found ourselves in a beautiful meadow, through which flowed a clear, placid stream, a tributary of the *Fourche de Glace*. Several deer were browsing near its banks, who fled precipitately at our approach.

We paused involuntarily to admire the beauties of this green spot, lying among the "foundations of the mountains." The tall grass waved in a gentle wind, and the fern and wild sage shed their balsamic odor in grateful abundance. Clusters of willows, and quaking aspen, skirted the borders of this little paradise in the wilderness.

Kosato pointed out several beaver lodges, the

owners of which had thus far escaped the enmity of the white man and the red. I felt a regret that these industrious and half-human creatures were fated to minister to the wants of a civilized taste.

The renegade assured us that there were fine trout in the stream, and being weary with hard riding, we were glad to make a halt to refresh ourselves and horses. We were all provided with fishing-lines, and for an hour enjoyed the sport of catching some dozens of the handsomest trout I ever beheld. These, cooked upon the coals, made a delicious repast, and I half persuaded myself that I should like to dwell in that romantic spot forever.

Our meal being dispatched, our horses were caught, and we pursued our way. Leaving the meadow, we were soon lost in the labyrinth of mountains. Having with considerable difficulty extricated ourselves from these, we entered a dark and gloomy pass, solemn and silent, as these deep and lonely solitudes are ever, toward the close of day.

I observed a change in the manner of Meridine the moment we struck into this pass. He seemed uneasy, and looked suspiciously from side to side. He was not a coward; a bolder heart never beat in a human bosom: if he feared, it was not for himself; it was for me only; for I was the brother of his dead Emil.

"Malcolm," he said, earnestly, "fall back, and let us keep together. *I know there is danger here.*"

"I have the same impression," I replied. While I spoke, a strange, shuddering sensation passed through my frame, and I felt a hand laid lightly upon my shoulder, gentle as the touch of woman when she persuades, and it seemed to hold me back with a gentle force. I turned quickly, thinking Meridine had come up with me; he was three times the length of his horse behind.

"Good heavens! how pale you look! What ails you?" exclaimed Meridine, in alarm.

"If I am pale, it is not with fear," I answered, recovering my equilibrium. "I had a strange sensation—an impression—a fancy—I know not what; but it was momentary. It is past now."

Before Meridine had time to reply, a terrific war-whoop rang through the pass; when I looked toward Kosato, he was surrounded by



Blackfeet warriors. Plucking the long-handled hatchet from my girdle, which I always carried when in the saddle, I sprang to the assistance of the renegade. My horse was well-trained, and rearing upon his hinder feet, he plunged into the thickest of them with a snort, and a tremendous bound. Kosato was fighting like a lion, and defied all their efforts to take him alive, which they seemed desirous of doing.

At the instant I reached his side, a heavy blow from the breech of a gun made him reel in his saddle, and several red arms were stretched forth to seize and secure him.

Wielding my hatchet with a dexterity acquired by long practice, and with all the strength of a strong arm, put forth in earnest, I did fearful execution. Not once did I deal a blow in vain. Several horses were relieved of their burdens in an incredibly short space of time.

The imminent danger that threatened Kosato was warded off for the time being, and we both turned our attention toward Meridine, who was contending manfully with overwhelming numbers.

Grasping his rifle by the barrel, he met his assailants with a vigor they did not expect. Being a very powerful man, his blows told with fatal effect. As I spurred toward him to assist in the work of crushing skulls, I was stricken from my horse, and knew no more.

I experienced what all persons do during a prolonged state of insensibility resulting from a violent shock of the brain—the deathlike stupor, the sickly dizziness, the dreadful bewilderment of returning sense,—sunset, darkness, and midnight; starlight, moonlight, and sunlight; sky and earth; men and trees, in successive gradations, mingling confusedly.

When I revived I was lying prone upon my back. I felt an excruciating pain in my members. I attempted to move my feet and gain some relief by change of place, but it was impossible; the exertion increased my misery. I strove to lift my hands to my throbbing temples; the effort was equally vain; I was bound, and a prisoner.

It was night, and I was lying in the open air. I looked up and saw the stars shining, and the moon pursuing its trackless way. I turned my bruised and aching head to look about me and learn something more of my situation. I saw the dying brands of what had been a large fire,

smouldering upon the ground, and dusky figures were stretched there in slumber. It is possible they were dreaming of the war-path, and the surprise, the fierce encounter, and the bloody scalp-lock—gory trophy of Indian prowess.

At a short distance the horses of the sleepers were picketed. Near the bivouac fire, I perceived what I at first believed was the trunk of a tree; but it proved to be the figure of a warrior, on the watch. So fixed was his attitude, that eyes keener than mine might have been deceived.

My true situation was now known; I was in the hands of the Blackfeet. But what had been the fate of Meridine and Kosato? My heart died within me when I recalled the circumstances of the fight, and I said to myself,

“My friend is no more. He has fallen in my defence. He has passed away with all his great and noble qualities.”

A tear trembled on my lids. I let it flow unchecked, nor thought it unmanly to weep for the brave and the good.

“Alas for thee, Meridine! Very pleasant wast thou to me, and thy love surpassed the love of woman.”

My thoughts reverted from my friend to myself. If there was any truth in the doctrine of another state of existence, beyond the dust and ashes of the grave, I should soon rejoin my friends, in all human probability. Mercy, and life, I could not, and did not, expect. I felt that I must die, and endeavored to look death in the face like a reasonable and brave man.

It were folly to say, that one can be raised entirely above fear and shrinking, under such circumstances; for while a man is capable of suffering, he is capable of fear; but a strong and courageous heart can battle manfully with the dissolving pangs of the last enemy.

## CHAPTER IV.

MINAWA.

THE pain of my bands was intolerable; I suffered intensely during the night. The first approach of morning was hailed with joy. My wrists and ankles were swollen and lacerated, and I could not move without the keenest torture.

My captors were stirring early, and my sensations of relief were inexpressible when my



bands were severed. I found it difficult to stand, and quite impossible to walk. The Indians assisted me to mount a horse, and our faces were turned toward the Blackfoot country, if they can be said to inhabit any particular place. I was treated very well; for, said they, "He is a brave warrior, and we do not hold brave men in contempt."

During my wanderings in the West, I had learned to speak the native language with tolerable fluency, and though it varied considerably in different tribes, I could nevertheless manage to make myself understood.

To all my inquiries respecting the fate of Meridine, I received indefinite and evasive answers. When I spoke of Kosato, they were silent, and testified that they heard me only by their dark and disdainful looks. They admired his high qualities for courage; but they hated the renegade.

Of the fifteen Blackfeet braves who had gone forth to distinguish themselves upon the war-path, but six remained; and their hearts were heavy, and their faces toward the earth. The warrior that I had wounded was still living, and able to sit on his horse. The motion of riding produced considerable suffering, but my presence as a prisoner seemed to indemnify him for all, and he bore his pains with commendable firmness; yet he could not, with all his philosophy, refrain from favoring me with some rather black looks, whenever a random jolt gave him a severer twinge than usual. There is no doubt but he burned me at the stake a great number of times that day—in imagination. This warrior was called "*An-nokwut*" or the "*War-Cloud*," a name indicating the perseverance with which he followed his enemies, and the terror which he inspired. But the thunders of the War-Cloud were now no longer dangerous, nor would they be for a long time to come.

For several days we followed the general course of Salmon River, my captors taking every precaution to leave no trail for an enemy to follow. They wrapped the horses' feet in skins; they made eccentric turns; crossed the river whenever it was practicable, and sometimes rode a mile or two in the beds of small streams.

They pushed forward as long as the darkness of night would permit, and were on the way as soon as it was light enough to see in the morning.

As melancholy as my fate was likely to be, I was glad when these painful journeyings were at an end. We found a large body of the Blackfeet encamped near the head waters of Salmon River. They came swarming from their lodges to meet us, filling the air with lamentations for the braves who had fallen.

At this crisis I should have been treated with the greatest severity, had it not been for the interference of my captors, who generously averred that I was a "great warrior, and should be well treated."

I was conducted to the lodge of one of the principal chiefs. My wounds were washed, and food was set before me, after which I was firmly secured, and left to my mournful meditations. Weary, wounded, and hopeless, I sank to sleep. In my dreams I saw the loved ones at home, and stood by the grave of Emile. I planted flowers upon her tomb and wept there. I journeyed to the Western wilds; I thirsted beneath the hot summer sun of the prairies; I hungered amid the cragged and gameless mountains; I met the red man and slew him; I eluded the ceaseless vigilance of my enemies; I found Meridine, and he told me the nature of the dark tidings I bore before I had unburdened my heart; I heard with awe a new and astounding doctrine, that filled my soul with wonder and vague yearnings. Unseen hands touched me, and their presence did not make me afraid. I listened to voices that speak only to the soul, and understood them well.

The touch of the unseen hands gave me joy; the sound of the spirit voices was seraphic music. In the unsubstantial bliss of those sleep-thoughts, I awoke, and, for the moment, deemed my vision was sooth. A daughter of the wilderness of about seventeen summers stood near the entrance of the lodge, regarding me with the deepest interest. Her attitude was graceful and easy. Her figure was bent slightly forward; with one hand she held back the skin which formed the entrance of the lodge; while with the other she threw back the flowing tresses of her dark hair and held them. The face was exquisitely beautiful; full of strange, wild sweetness. The eyes, the cheeks, the lips spake; to me their language was eloquent. The complexion was clear, and nearly as white as my own; yet every feature showed her Indian origin.

Many persons, who have never visited the Indian country, may find it difficult to picture a Blackfoot beauty, and feel inclined to raise some doubts in regard to the matter; but I do not hesitate to assure such that beauty may be found in the wilderness, as well as within the limits of civilization. There are flowers growing in the deep and unvisited valleys, as fair and fragrant as those found in the highly cultivated *parterre*.

The Indian girl, perceiving that I noticed her, was about to turn away from the lodge, when I raised myself to a sitting posture, and said,

"*Guma*,"—the Indian term for water.

Instantly she disappeared, and after a short absence returned, bearing an abundance of the precious beverage in a vessel of birch bark.

"*Keezhamonedo anpadushawainenik*,"—"The Great Spirit reward you," I said, when I had quenched my thirst.

"*Monaudud aindangun*,"—"This is a bad place for the pale-face," she replied.

"Very true; but how can I help it. I was brought hither by your people."

"The white man should stay in his own country," she answered, earnestly.

"But I came hither with no evil purpose. I wished to learn the manners and customs of your race."

"Does the pale-face wish to become like us, that he comes to learn our mode of living?" she asked, with an incredulous look.

"No; we prefer our own way of living to yours."

"Then why did you want to know our manners and customs? Tell me *that*."

"Because we experience pleasure in visiting other countries, and acquiring knowledge."

She shook her head, and smiled, as much as to say, "That *may* be, and may *not* be, true."

"Who are you?" I asked, with as much courtesy as the occasion required.

"I am *Minwawa*, (The Pleasant Sound,) the daughter of Lagonda, and sister to Annokwut whom you have wounded."

"How long will they suffer me to live?"

"I do not know. Does the white man fear to die?"

"I have no great fear of death; but I dread the fiendish cruelty of your people."

"Do not your people torture their enemies?"

"The Master of Life forbid! They use them

well, and if it be necessary to slay them, they dispatch them without torture."

"That is good," replied Minwawa, with much feeling. "I wish my people would learn to do so. My heart is not big enough to see them torture their prisoners. Why did the pale-face come hither to be taken captive by my people? He is very young to die; his friends will wait many suns for his return; but they will wait in vain."

I was deeply moved by the simple words of the Indian girl, and made no reply. I had found sympathy and pity at a time when I least expected it.

"Our warriors say that white men are avaricious, and envy the red men and their pleasant lands. They tell me that the pale-faces are deceitful and hate our race, and would like nothing better than to burn us all, and take our country all to themselves. You do nothing but tell lies, they say, and all your fine talk is to deceive us, that you may accomplish your purpose."

"There are good and bad men among all races. It is the bad men of our people only, who do you wrong; the good have your welfare and happiness at heart. They seem to wrong their red brothers. They would have them grow wise and good, cultivate the earth, and live at peace with each other. Happiness is not found on the war-path: it is found in the practice of virtue and benevolence, and in the pursuit of knowledge. There is a higher life, Minwawa, than that led by your people."

Minwawa mused, and seemed to take my meaning perfectly.

"I have thought of this," she replied, with much earnestness, fixing her soft, dark eye upon me with an expression of interest and intelligence hardly to have been hoped for.

"The poor Indian maiden has thought of the higher life her white brother has spoken of. The winds have whispered it to her; the brooks and rivers have talked of it; the vast mountains and wide prairies have had a voice; the clouds have not been silent, and the moon and stars have spoken."

"And what have all these things talked of?" I asked.

"I have not the power to tell you. I am not learned like the pale-face; yet there is that within my heart that tells me of something bet-



ter—a something that I cannot describe. The religion of my people does not satisfy me; it is barbarous and inconsistent. I like not our mode of life; and yet I would not change it altogether. The trees, and rivers, and mountains, and prairies are pleasant to me; I love them: but this is not all; my spirit sighs for something more."

"I will tell you what it sighs for; it is for a kindred spirit—a sister soul. Even here in the midst of these wild mountains, the light of a better day has dawned upon you. The germ of a higher life has sprung up spontaneously in your bosom. Cherish and cultivate the tender bud, and it will grow and fill your heart's temple with glorious thoughts and aspirations. It is the germ—the moving principle—that exalts nations as well as individuals."

Minwawa smiled sadly. She clasped her hands, and raised her tearful eyes to heaven. As she stood there in her untutored simplicity and grace, with her eloquent face shining with the bright thought that struggled for utterance, she was transcendent in her beauty.

I forgot my own danger. The stake and the fagots faded from my remembrance. I lived only in the bliss of the discovery I had made—the discovery of a pure and unspoiled child of nature, to love and guide toward the higher spheres of existence.

I was alone. Minwawa had gone—flitted away so suddenly that I doubted whether it were not all an illusion. Perhaps my disordered brain had conjured up the *ideal* being that it had dwelt upon so long, and thus deceived my external senses.

The night came on. Despite my wounds and bands, my thoughts dwelt upon "The Pleasant Sound," until the tardiest stars came twinkling forth.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ESCAPE.

**U**PON the day following, the Blackfeet warriors were long at the council fire. After some discussion, it was resolved that I should be put to death. I was not overwhelmed with the prospect before me; for I had expected it from the first. The execution of my sentence was not carried into immediate effect; they were anxious that the wounds of the "War

Cloud" should heal, in order that he might participate in the ceremonies of the occasion, and doubtless it would have been a great cruelty to have deprived him of that pleasure. He had been active in devising my capture, and very properly, as my red brethren thought, wished to be "in at the death."

I need not dilate on the horrors of my situation. The reader has already pictured in *his* mind a death by the ordeal of fire; not an instantaneous destruction; but a slow, lingering, dreadfully protracted series of demonic cruelties surpassing the power of human description. I cannot, and I wish not to dwell upon the concentrated horrors of such a death-scene. The strongest hearts instinctively turn from it with unspeakable dread. But I will say that I strove to comport myself like a man; that I gave evidence of no cowardly shrinking; that I was calm, outwardly, in the presence of my enemies, and gave them no cause to exult in my terror of the fate in reserve for me.

I struggled to fix my mind firmly upon God, and banish all thoughts of the appalling concomitants of an Indian execution.

It was the fourth day of my captivity. My life was to end on the morrow. I had been placed, at my request, where I could see the sun rise and set. I know not why it is, but nearly all persons near death, or dying, experience a mournful pleasure in gazing upon that blessed luminary for a few minutes before they close their eyes eternally upon all sublunary things. I watched it as it was setting. How faithfully it had lighted me through the world! and now I asked myself how many ages it would shine over my ashes before the trump of God and the shout of the Archangel should bid them awake and clothe themselves in the elements of immortality. Perhaps a hundred years, perhaps a thousand, and it might be a thousand million!

Strong, strong must be thy faith, O thou of woman born, to derive consolation and the fullness of joy from the hope of a resurrection, distant, dreamy, half-understood. The sun sank down, and I saw its glorious fires go out. The night, with its gentle starlight and moonlight, covered the earth. I fell into a reverie. I thought of Meridine and his strange doctrine, and then my mind fixed itself upon *Emile* with an intensity hitherto unknown. I seemed to

rise above the difficulties of my situation. New thoughts and desires had birth. The animal part of my being was forgotten, and I dwelt in a region purely intellectual and spiritual. Those interests, objects, and pursuits, which had hitherto been all-absorbing and important, faded from the eye of vision. The fire and the fagot of the dread to-morrow were seen but dimly. "Whether in the body or out of the body I know not."

I heard a voice; and to me it was the voice of the dead Emile. Some persons may call it fancy—the effect of an imagination overheated in the prospect of an awful doom. Let them say so; I care not. Their mere dictum will not make one hair white or black. I explain nothing. I do not profess to trace causes and effects in this history. I simply tell my experience, and let it pass for what it is worth. I ask no one, nor can I compel any person, to follow me through these chapters.

I heard a voice! Sneer if you will, but I heard it. Whether it spoke only to the *inner sense*—the spiritual entity—I say not; those wiser than I may decide. If it addressed only the immortal principle of life within me, it was enough; it was heard.

Sweet were the tones of that spirit voice—sweet as notes of celestial music:

"Fear not the gates of death. Death is a passport to a higher life; it is not annihilation, but a *change*—a glorious assumption of a new form of existence. Dost thou dread the pain of transformation? Cease to do so. As the contingencies of thy day, so shall thy strength be. Shrink not from the momentary pain of putting off thine old garment of mortality, and putting on the new. Hark to the words of the Great Law-Giver; you must be born again—born of the spirit. Hear thou, and understand. 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit.'

"I have passed the ordeal, and that which you falsely name death is but the commencement of life. You were near me when I left the body; but spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and you perceived me not. Your interior perception was sealed up; for the truth had not made you free. You saw not the beautiful form I had assumed; heeded not when I smiled upon you, and felt the joy which is unspeakable. I walked away upon the elastic atmosphere, and

left you weeping over what had been Emile.  
\* \* \* \* \* I was permitted to behold all my earthly friends before I journeyed to the fair countries of the higher life. \* \* \* I beheld Meridine. He reclined upon the verdant bank of a river, and gazing into its waters, likened it to the River of Death. He was thinking of me, and his thoughts were lofty and pure. The thoughts are but the *movements of the soul*, and to those like me they are visible, tangible things. I can read and understand them at *will*.

"Meridine was in that calm, elevated state of mind, when it is possible for the dwellers in the higher life to respond to the impulses of the soul—to give evidence of their spiritual presence. I made myself audible to his inner consciousness. His noble mind aroused itself, and shook off its earthly tendencies. He arose toward the higher life—he heard and recognized me. I told him all, and with my counsels and presence tempered down the sharp agony of his soul. I made him conscious that they had laid the temple, that I used to inhabit, in the earth, but I—his Emile—was still with him; that he could elevate himself toward the higher life, and we could meet on the boundaries of the two worlds; that he could become sensible of my presence.

"Peace and joy took possession of his faculties. He longed for the change which I had experienced, that he might join me and be at rest. But I bade him bide his time in obedience to the will of the Creator of the spheres.

"Glorious is the life beyond the Valley and the Shadow. Mortal ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the vastness of the Spirit Universe.

"But it is your destiny to tarry in the flesh. You are not ready for the birth of the spirit. You may not die—your time is not yet. Fear not the stake and the fagot. No human hand hath power to take your life. Many years of earthly existence shall be yours. Man hath his appointed *hour*; water cannot drown you, fire cannot burn you, steel cannot pierce your heart until your hour come. The hairs of your head are numbered. Rest calmly under the assurance of His protection, whose name I need not utter. You are not the creature of chance; at His mandate you came forth clothed in the first elements of life, and at His mandate alone you



will depart clothed in an eternal and more perfect being. Human creatures drop not and die like the falling leaves; for He orders all things. You will pass from captivity unscathed by fire. But you will carry away with you a new element—an element common to the dwellers in both worlds. A fair face and form shall tempt you to danger. A 'Pleasant Sound' shall chain your senses to the earth. I say not whether you have loved wisely or unwisely; for it is not given me to reveal all things. Your life shall be an eventful one;—it shall be beset with danger, and harassed with care, but it shall be crowned with the object of its efforts at last.

"You would ask if you shall be sensible of my presence again; I answer you not. That depends upon yourself, and the energy with which you struggle for the higher life. We are accessible, by the few, when rightly sought after. Ask me not of Meridine—he is safe. The hour of your release is at hand. Be watchful and wary. Sleep not, but look steadfastly toward the place of the sun's rising, for the hand that shall liberate you will come from that direction. In times of peril I shall not be far from you; but trust not in me—trust in Him who giveth me this life, and the power of guarding His earthly children. When danger is near, it is possible you may be warned.

"I hear the music of the celestial worlds; 'tis the signal to withdraw myself from the consciousness of your inward being. Adieu!—I haste to participate in new joys."

\* \* \* \* \*

I raised myself from the earth where I had been lying, like a person just awaking from the illusions of a heavenly dream. No one was near. The moon was still looking upon me with her gentle face.

I asked myself if I had been dreaming; but I could not or dared not answer. A calm delight pervaded my soul. Had I been the subject of angel ministry, or had I deceived myself with brain-shadows—airy nothings, to vanish with the dawn?

\* \* \* \* \*

I heard a light step; Minwawa stood beside me. I had seen her several times since my doom had been pronounced by the chiefs, but never had she appeared so irresistibly beautiful as now. I had, in other days, met the fairest of my countrywomen; but none were like her;

they lacked that unknown, indescribable grace that attracted me toward the Indian maiden. Her beauty seemed of a more spiritual cast than hitherto—even the beauty of inspiration. Her eyes beamed with sympathy, and her cheeks were wet with crystal drops.

"Why do you weep?" I asked.

"Because my white brother dies. My thoughts are troubled; I cannot sleep," she replied, in a voice scarcely audible.

"And does Minwawa shed those tears for me?" I continued, in a gentle, yet earnest tone.

"For who else should she shed them? Her heart was light and untroubled until she saw her white brother; but now it is very heavy. She thinks of no one but the pale-face; for he has spoken to her of the higher life. The white stranger must live. A voice has said to Minwawa, 'He must not die; it has told me so to-night, and it keeps repeating it.'"

"A voice, did you say?"

"A voice," she answered.

"And was it audible?"

"It was audible *here*," she replied, laying her hand upon the organ of perception. "But that is not all; a voice is speaking to me *here*,"—placing her other hand upon her heart; "it is a part of myself, and it talks of pity, and something else that I do not well understand. Perhaps you can tell me."

I heard her pronounce the words with pleasure unspeakable, for that new element in her heart, which she could not understand, was the element of love. I—Henry Malcolm—who had been favored by the friendships of the lovely and gifted of my own countrywomen, was filled with overflowing emotions of pleasure, because I had awakened a softer sentiment in the bosom of a poor Indian maiden.

How wild and extravagant is love! it makes us forget suffering and danger; it disarms us of reason. I, who was condemned to perish on the morrow, was madly, blindly thinking of the charms of an unlearned daughter of the wilderness.

Mastering my emotions, I said in a calm, yet gentle manner—

"Minwawa, I love you, though you bear not the complexion of my race. My heart has been yours since the hour you first stood in my presence. Your wonderful beauty, simplicity, and

intelligence, have won my adoration. I shall not forget you while I retain any recollections of earthly objects. You shall share in my thoughts till the last. But my end approaches—the death-fires will be lighted in the morning, and it would be cruel to ask you to love me in return. Still, I would not have you forget me. Remember the words I have spoken to you of the higher life. Teach your people mercy and humanity; bid them follow peace with all the tribes of your red brethren. Aspire after the knowledge of civilization, and the ways of civilized men. Forget not that you have within you an immortal principle—a germ of an eternal life that shall gather new beauties with the flight of ages, and during the term of innumerable years.”

Minwawa turned slowly from me. Directing her eyes toward the south, and pressing her hands to her temples, she stood motionless as stone; her breathing seemed suspended; she gave no sign that the heart beat, or that the currents of life were flowing.

That was doubtless the first storm of real agony that ever shook her young spirit.

I interrupted not her grief by word or gesture, for I deemed it best that it should exhaust itself without molestation.

When next she turned her face toward me, it was fixed and calm in its expression; its dark Indian blood had receded, and left it fair as the whitest of the daughters of my people. The eyes were tearless, and the naturally soft lines of the forehead were almost stern in their rigidity. Her figure was drawn up erect and graceful. The lofty and daring spirit of the forest maiden was aroused. She looked the Indian princess to the climax of the character.

“Pale-face,” she said, loftily, and with a graceful motion of the hand, “Minwawa scorns to utter a lie. She never lied, and she never will. She loves you; how devotedly she loves you, she is not eloquent enough to tell; but of this she will not speak. You are in danger; but you must not die, and *shall* not. If Minwawa has not power to save you, she will journey with you to the land of the higher life. You saw me look toward the south; our people say it is the way to the world of souls. Minwawa has vowed to follow you there, if she cannot save you from death. She will find the path that leads to the country of perpetual spring,

and leave behind her the country of snow and ice. She will know the direction, for the hills and trees will grow more beautiful as she goes on, and birds of heavenly plumage will sing before her, and they will tell in their songs whether the white man passed that way. Minwawa will die, or the pale stranger shall live.”

The words of Minwawa recalled the language of the vision. “Your time is not yet. You will pass from captivity unscathed by fire; but you will carry away with you a new element—an element common to the dwellers in both worlds.”

That new element was the element of an enduring love. How deeply I felt the truth of the words! If anything was wanting before to make the “Pleasant Sound” the idol of my affections, it was the impassioned outburst I had just heard. Though filled with the tenderest compassion for her distress, I could not help feeling the sustaining wings of a new hope. I thought of a happy escape “unscathed by fire,” and pictured to myself a rural paradise far away in some undiscovered spot, with Minwawa for its earthly divinity. I had long ago sketched the outlines of such a being, and of such a home, but had despaired of both; now, while my limbs were bound, and I could with difficulty turn my eyes toward the four cardinal points of heaven—the darkest moment of my existence, in a physical sense—I seized upon the hope I had cast away in other days.

“Good and beautiful Minwawa! I am sensible of the high and holy feelings which influence you,” I exclaimed. “But die for me you must not; you must live to shed the light of your goodness upon your rude people; to soften and temper them down to the condition of peace-loving and civilized men. It is not time for you to go to the country of eternal spring; the land of snow and ice must still be your home. If I go first, I will watch by the River of Death for your coming, and the ‘White Stone Canoe’ with its shining paddles shall be ready to bear you across to the country of shadows. Happy will be our meeting, for there are no graves there to separate the hearts that love.”

“Do not talk more of the land of souls; you will not yet journey toward the south, where shadows are living things. You will baffle the hate of Annokwut; for it is the will of the



Master of Life. Listen to me. A powerful Manito guards the footsteps of my white brother, and it has the form of a beautiful white woman. Her track is like the touch of the moonbeams. Her home is the land of the higher life. Her smile is like the light of the morning, and her voice as the melody we hear in dreams. I have seen her to-night—she talked with me in the grove of willows. She told me your time was not yet; that you must not die. I knew not how she spoke to me; the words came like shadows, and burned in my brain like fire.”

‘Have you not been dreaming?’ I asked, while my heart beat with uncontrollable emotions.

“O, no! People must *sleep* to dream; I did not sleep, and therefore did not dream. I sat down in the grove of willows to think of you and how I might save you; I must have been waking.”

“This is wonderful!” I answered, while a feeling of awe crept over me.

“It is now near midnight,” said Minwawa. “In an hour I will come to you again; my people will then be wrapt in sleep. I will sever your bands, and trust the rest to the Master of Life. You must elude the vigilance of the warriors who watch at a short distance from here. It will be difficult to avoid them, for their hearts burn to avenge the braves whom you have slain. In a few minutes Sagonda will visit you to see that all is safe. After he has left you, I will return to do as I have said. Let your heart be brave, and your arm strong.”

Minwawa had been gone but a few minutes when I heard the approaching footsteps of the chief. I closed my eyes, and feigned the most profound sleep. After observing me a short time, and satisfying himself that I was securely bound, he turned away, and I was again alone.

On one side of me was Salmon River, and a grove of willows; on the other, at the distance of a few rods, a band of Blackfeet warriors formed a semicircle reaching nearly to the banks of the river. It will be seen, therefore, that, under these circumstances, escape would be exceedingly difficult.

As I lay ruminating on this subject, I saw an elk approaching the encampment from the direction of the river. I should have thought little of this circumstance, had it not been that the animal kept steadily, yet cautiously, advanc-

ing, until he seemed in the midst of the slumbering warriors. This incident struck me as being remarkable, for the elk seldom approaches within gun-shot of an encampment. It came on like a creature sensible of its danger, now stopping to cast furtive and startled glances around, and now screening itself behind a bush or a tree. Passing the unconscious Blackfeet, the strange elk came directly towards me. What could this singular demonstration mean? Was it all an optical delusion, was it a reality, or was I losing my senses? It occurred to me that so many singular events had transpired within a few days that my mind had been thrown from its proper balance, and I lived in a region of fancy, beholding not the things which were, but those which had no real existence. Notwithstanding this rather plausible theory, I could not disguise the fact that the elk still advanced within the circle of the sleeping braves, its footsteps giving back no sound, its presence creating no alarm. It came nearer and nearer still, until it confronted me at the distance of three yards.

Filled with amazement, I could only gaze into its placid, yet dull eyes, in silence. Suddenly the elk arose upon its hinder feet, the skin fell from its head, and a miracle was wrought; for Kosato, the Blackfoot renegade, stood beside me! His swarthy, yet noble features were calm, and gave no sign of fear. He motioned me to silence; and then I saw a bright blade gleam in the moonbeams. The cords fell from my hands and feet, even as the irons fell from the limbs of Peter when the angel bade him “arise.”

I stretched out my arms, and glorious were the sensations of freedom which I experienced. A life new and hopeful seemed to glow within me. In the past I had been weary of living, but now existence was precious to me as the dust of the new Eldorado to the soul of the miser; it had received strength and vitality from the new element I was destined to bear away in my bosom—the element of love. The renegade placed weapons in my hands. My lips were silent, but my heart and eyes were not, and in the latter the daring red man read a feeling of gratitude too deep and fervent to be clothed in the dress of words.

Smiling grimly, he led the way from the encampment the same as he had come. With the

breathlessness of a shadow, I followed in his footsteps. We came to where the warriors slumbered, and then was the dread moment of peril. We heard their long and regular respirations as we walked among them. We had well-nigh left them, when one, less soundly steeped in the oblivion of sleep, uttered a low cry, and arose to his elbow; in an instant Kosato was at his side. I saw his strong hand cover the waking warrior's mouth—I saw his steel glimmer like lightning in the air—I heard a smothered sound which I shall not forget for many a day, it was so full of death's latest agony—I saw a spasmodic motion of the Indian's body. For half a minute, or more, the renegade held his stalwart hand like a vice over the victim's mouth; then he drew his hunting-knife from the heart whose pulsations had ceased forever.]

I glanced at the body as Kosato took his knees from the quivering chest; the eyes were already fixed, and the grim face gave back only the impress of death; thus quietly had the soul of the red man departed for the land of the south, where are the hunting-grounds of his fathers.

As the renegade went forward, I heard drops of the crimson life fall from the bright steel blade upon the leaves. I shuddered, and followed my deliverer, asking myself what other man could have met such a danger, and conquered it so suddenly, so effectually.

We reached the river in safety. Close under the bank I perceived a canoe; a man was sitting in the stern, holding a paddle. We stepped into the frail vessel—the suspended paddle dipped into the water, and we swept softly away from our enemies.

## CHAPTER VI.

NIXON.

**P**ROPELLED by the practised hands of Kosato and the stranger, the light canoe shot through the water with the rapidity of an arrow.

The person of the stranger is worthy of some description. He probably stood six feet high in his stockings. He was decidedly one of the *lean* kind, the muscular system being very meagre in its development, or the absence of all adipose matter producing the effect of giving that impression to the observer. The cheeks

were very hollow, and the bones of the face prominent. The nose was constructed on the Wellington principle, with some little improvements and exaggerations in point of size. In his case it was certainly the leading feature, conjuring up the idea of the bowsprit of a "seventy-four" placed by some unaccountable mistake upon the bows of a common "fore-and-after." The eyes were a dark gray, deep set, and expressive of much shrewdness. The perceptive organs were largely developed. He probably found the number of his age somewhere between thirty-five and forty. His dress was in keeping with the habits of a wandering trapper and forest rover in general.

A light foraging-cap, (of his own manufacture, most likely,) deer-skin hunting-shirt and breeches, and Indian moccasins, made up the external of his "outer man." About his waist he wore a stout leather strap, which sustained a hatchet, hunting-knife, a brace of horse-pistols, and last, but not least, (in his estimation,) a smoking-pipe with a stone bowl and a wooden stem. His rifle, which lay beside him in the "birch," was unquestionably a wonderful one, it being something like five feet six inches from the trigger to the muzzle, carrying a ball equal in size to the calibre of a "United States" piece."

"That sprinklin' of Perticerler Death," as he eloquently termed it, in the true spirit of "Roaring Ralph," was a "great comfort to him in his afflictions." He had shot "*rip-tiles*" with it "an unknown number of times," when beaver was scarce, and time hung heavy on his hands. This was an "oncommon blessin'," for it kind of kept his spirits up," and exercised "a salutary influence upon his health and general constitution." As for "bufferler, deer, and other game, he never was the man as wantonly destroyed 'em, for they was undispensible as articles of food, and were sort of human-like in their natures."

"I'm a man as goes in for the general improvement of the hull human famerly," said Nixon (for thus shall we call him). "It don't argoo much for a man's nateral religious feelins to see him pepperin' away jest for amusement at anythin' upon four legs as won't support life; it's onnatural and cruel, and shows a mind as has no tendency to rise in the scale of bein'; but when I sees a modest, well-berhaved chap



a sendin' perticerler death among the red rip-tiles as retard the progress of Christianity and other arts and sciences, it raises that chap in my estimation, and I feel it a dooty and priverlege to make his acquaintance. Such a man has everdently been under the redeemin' inflerence o' slow conviction, and has some knowledge of the work o' grace, and the ways and means o' per-motin' human progress and civilerzation."

"Have you been long in these parts?" I asked, accommodatin' myself to his style of conversin'g.

"About twelve years, off and on, stranger," he replied.

"That is a long time to dwell in the wilderness. Do you not tire of such a life?"

"Not a bit of it; I could n't live no other; for you see I'm gettin' too old to larn new habits. Let them live in cities as is used to it; but give me these mountains and valleys, prairies and forests for my home, and I won't ask no more."

"But you are in danger of losing your scalp, daily."

"It's the danger that fasernates me, stranger. If there wa' n't no danger, I'd shoulder "Perticerler Death," and be off. Life would n't be nothin' wuth mentionin', without excitement; and there would n't be no excitement under the canopy o' natur without danger. Now a wise Providence, knowin' the peculiar constitution of his creturs, marcifully threw in a plentiful sprinklin' o' the red rip-tiles, in order that life might n't become monotonous-like, for want of amusement."

"You consider it vastly amusing, then, to fight Indians?"

"Well, it's better nor idleness, stranger. I've experienced uncommon satisfaction in that way. But there's an amazin' heap o' bunglers in the bizness, and it requires a life e'enamost to become a *raal artist*."

"What do you mean by becoming a 'real artist'?" I asked, with a look of wonder.

"How long have you been in the bush, stranger?" he asked, somewhat contemptuously.

"About twelve months," I answered.

Nixon shook his head dubiously.

"You've got a great deal to learn, young man, afore you become a ginerwine backwoodsman. This finishin' 'em off is a reg'lar science, and requires a heap o' study and practice. Each

man has his perticerler fancy. Some shoot in the eye; others prefer the bridge o' the nose; and a third party are fond o' the heart, stomach and lungs for a mark. I'm not a notional chap, by no means. I can see sunthin' good in everythin', (except in the perverse natures of the nateral rip-tiles of this sile,) and I'm willin' that each individeoal should be governed accordin' to the dictates of his consience, reservin' to myself the same priverlege. When I fust came to these parts, I used to finish 'em off on the disablin' system."

"How was that?"

"The disablin' system is where you knock 'em off their nateral pins without woundin' any o' the vital organs. When a rip-tile is fairly shot through both his nateral legs, he is just as good as dead, and you don't run no risk in countin' his scalp, unless you get worsted in the fight, and his friends carry him away. I've done it many a time when I warn't in no great hurry, and beavers were gettin' cunnin' about takin' trap. Like all other arts and sciences, it requires practice, and some knowledge of the anotomy of the body, because as how the bones must be broke in order to carry out and illustrate the beauty o' the system. The advanterges o' this perticerler fact is self-evident, and can be understood by the most inexperienced beginner. If no bones is broken, ten to one if he don't run away, and you lose a good charge o' powder and ball without permotin' the cause o' civilerzation in the least; but when the nateral pins is once broken, there is nothin', accordin' to the laws o' philoserphy, to support the anermal corperation, and in cumpliance with the rules and regerlations of gravertation, it sticks to the sod; because the nateral constertootion of a rip-tile is in the legs, and nothin' shorter."

Herc Kosato, who had hitherto been a silent listener, shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and looked knowingly at the long limbs of Nixon, thinking, doubtless, if his constitution was in proportion to their length, it must be remarkably strong.

There being a momentary pause in the conversation, I eagerly asked after the welfare of Meridine.

"Our white brother is badly wounded," replied the renegade.

"Will he recover—is there hope?"

"He will live," returned Kosato. "He can-

not die while the Bending Willow is near him."

"And who is the Bending Willow?"

"The Bending Willow is the light of Kosato's eyes—the wife of his heart; and the fires of his lodge will not go out while he is gone," he answered with much warmth.

"You love her, then?"

Kosato laid his hand upon his heart, and was silent for a moment.

"Do the birds love the air? Do the fishes love to swim in the water? Do the leaves turn toward the sun?"

"Is she beautiful?"

"Her figure is lithe as the willow, and graceful as the timid antelope. Her eyes are like the stars, when the stars beam softly. Her face is like the moon, when the moon is mild and loving. Her lips are like red prairie-flowers, when prairie-flowers are sweetest. Her voice is like the murmur of the waters, when the waters laugh and sparkle, and make pleasant music."

"You describe her eloquently," I said, smiling at his enthusiasm.

"It's all true, Cap'en," added Nixon, "only he has n't described half o' her nateral beauty. I am a man as has seen a heap o' the female gender fust and last, from a raal Hottentot, with a stick in her nose, to a live Yankee girl; and I've come in contract with all colors and complexions, from the darkest to the whitest; but I can't say I ever saw a harnsomer cretur than the Bendin' Willer. It's my perticerler belief, that you ought to see sich a panerarma of loveliness. There ain't nothin' blacker nor her hair; and if any person should see anything blacker, I should like to have that person write me. There ain't no hunting-shirt in existence that she can't look through with her nateral eyes, and put your heart in a flutter. Her neck and shoulders are most uncommon in the way o' grace and plumpness. As for the ginerall cemetery of her figure, it's without an equal in any country; Old Nixon has said it; and I should like to meet the cretur as will contradict me." And the trapper laid his hand on "Perticerler Death," and looked grim enough.

"She's human all over," he added, as he perceived no person was bold enough to come forward and gainsay him.

"I fear my friend Meridine is still in danger.

Wounds dealt by bright eyes are often deep and incurable," I observed.

"There's nothin' more nateral," answered Nixon. "But she's got no sort o' affection for anybody but her perprierter. She'd go through fire and water for him, and I don't much blame her for likin' him, for he's an uncommon rip-tile."

There was a roguish leer in the trapper's eye as he spoke, and a half smile curled the lip of the renegade. It was obvious that a friendship of a peculiar kind existed between them.

"I raaly believe," continued Nixon, pointing at Kosato, "that that cretur has experienced a work o' grace. But it isn't often that these children o' Hagar know anythin' o' the savin' inference o' slow conviction; because they're joined to their idols, and can't be separated. I don't think it would be blastphemy to say that this runagade has a nateral soul—a soul as contains the elements of a mortal princerpul as won't never give in."

"From what I know of our brave friend, you cannot speak too highly in his praise," I answered.

"He's a nateral prince, and I could n't no more bring Perticerler Death to bear on him, than I could turn it against one o' my own countrymen. This nateral runagade is a rip-tile as I would fight for so long as I was able to shoulder Perticerler Death, or cut right and left with my hatchet."

Kosato acknowledged this tribute by pressing his hand to his heart—the most eloquent acknowledgment he could have made.

"Speakin' o' the different styles o' finishin'," resumed Nixon, "I don't bind myself to any perticerler system; but still I have my senterments on that interestin' subject. I have some ginerall hankerin' arter the mouth—because as why, I wish to finish 'em without breakin' the nateral skin."

"But how can you shoot them in the mouth? It strikes me that an Indian does not always keep his mouth open!"

"The case is exactly here: the rip-tiles have a mighty habit o' yellin', and makin' all kinds of onnateral noises; consequently they are allers naterally open to conviction; and a feller has only to watch his chance and blaze away. It's sometimes the case that a couple of the incissors (incisors) are knocked out; but I've



seen 'em when you could n't tell what hurt 'em. When the thing is done skilfully, the lead messenger usually lodges in the back o' the head, near what you'd call the orgin o' philojenny-tiveness. They don't allers giv' in immedarately, but howl naterally for a considable time and longer. Under these carcumstances, a rip-tile is a beautiful subjeck o' study; and it's very comfortin' to the mourners, for the corpse looks jist like life, the skin not bein' broke. It's a thing worthy the contemplation o' painters, sculpins, (sculptors,) and other lovers of the fine arts."

"I dare say you are a competent judge," I answered.

"Don't mar the works o' natur, is my motto."

"A very good motto, certainly."

Here Kosato held up his hand to enjoin silence.

"We saw the trail of a small war-party hereabouts, as we come along, yesterday," said Nixon, by way of explanation, and in a low tone. "It's possible I may have a chance to illustrate the beauties of my oncommon system of finishin'. You're a stranger it's true, but I'm willin' to do you a bit o' kindness in a bizness way."

I thanked the trapper for his benevolent intentions, and the "birch" glided swiftly and silently on. Sometimes we shot onward overshadowed by the overhanging branches of trees, and then, emerging from the deep gloom, we skimmed the clear surface of the moon-lit waters undimmed by cliff or shadow.

My mind was too much preoccupied to admire the wild and varied scenery upon either hand, which, under happier auspices, might have claimed a share of my attention. My strange escape, Minwawa, Meridine, Emile, were the subjects uppermost in my thoughts.

The sun was just lifting its fiery disc from its gorgeous bed upon the eastern verge. Not a word had been spoken for the last half hour. Nixon had suspended his efforts at the paddle, and with "Percierler Death" resting across his arm, sat in the attitude of listening. His head was slightly thrust forward, and inclined toward the thickly-wooded shore, upon our left. The initiated hand of Kosato held the paddle; and its sharp, narrow blade cut the yielding waters like the fin of a fish, giving no sound, leaving only a gentle ripple behind.

The face of the renegade was calm, placid and self-reliant as usual. His manner indicated that there was danger near, yet it told no tale of fear or cowardly shrinking. Danger could not *surprise* him, for he was always *conscious* of danger, and conscious also of his ability to meet it. His escapes had been many; and the simple yet honest Shoshonies believed that he bore a charmed life; that bullets would turn aside before they reached him; that steel would glance harmless from his flesh; that fire would not burn him. Well might they cherish the belief, and love, fear, and obey the mighty chieftain!

We glided on, and the busy paddle flashed in the sunlight of a glorious morning. Suddenly the dexterous arm of the renegade ceased to give its strokes, and the tiny "birch" shot forward with the momentum it had received. He and the trapper exchanged rapid glances. The quivering paddle dipped once more, and "back-ed water." The canoe lay trembling beneath the guiding strength of the chief. The long, bony neck of the trapper was thrust out, and his keen gray eyes were strained with intense eagerness towards the shore. Each nerve and muscle seemed obedient to his will. A momentary gleam of satisfaction flashed from his eyes, and "Percierler Death" leaped to his shoulder, apparently, by its own volition. It was but a single instant that the long, dark barrel was motionless, and then it sent forth its fiery messenger of destruction.

A howl, fierce, revengeful, fearful, followed. The trapper fell to reloading with the quickness of lightning. Kosato, with a few bold, nervous strokes, which made the paddle bend like a willow wand, drove the "birch" quivering to the shore.

"You can stay, Cap'en, if you don't like to foller," said Nixon, hurriedly, as he placed the cap in its proper position.

I made no answer, but snatching the hatchet from his belt, leaped ashore before him, eager for the fight. Kosato and the trapper sprang after; but I had met an enemy, and cloven his head from the crown to the chin, before they were engaged.

"Tarnal destruction! how he handles that bit o' steel!" I heard Nixon exclaim as I met my second antagonist (a tremendous savage of some six feet) and hurled him to the earth with



a single sweep of my powerful arm—an arm, small though it be, but few men are able to resist.

Though my wounds were not yet entirely healed, and my limbs felt the effects of the cords which had bound and paralyzed them for the time, I never fought better, or felt a greater consciousness of physical strength. Perhaps the memory of my wrongs lent new energy to my blows, and it is possible that a desire to outdo Nixon had something to do with it, for, truth to tell, I had been a little piqued at the patronizing air of the free-trapper.

We had discovered the scouting party mentioned by the latter. The number of our foes it was not easy to tell; therefore, without pausing to give ourselves any uneasiness on that score, we were soon engaged in a terrible hand to hand and breast to breast encounter.

I heard "Peticerler Death" crack once more, and the horse-pistols immediately after. Strange exclamations occasionally reached my ears, such as—

"Down, rip-tiles! peticerler death to ye! There's an uncommon setler for ye, you nateral Hindu! Take that, you greasy varmint, and my blessin' with it!" &c., &c.

When I had no longer an assailant to confront, I paused and surveyed the scene of the fight. Kosato was straggling fiercely with a gigantic warrior, and it was difficult to foresee which would prove the strongest of the twain; but after a desperate conflict of several minutes, the renegade was victorious. He bore his antagonist to the earth, and sheathed his sharp hunting-knife in his heart.

"That rip-tile had a heap o' nateral strength," remarked Nixon, as Kosato arose, panting and bloody.

"He was a brave warrior," replied the renegade, sadly, turning with a slight shudder from the face of the dead. "But he was my enemy, and we could not both live, for he had sworn to pursue me to the death. I wish his spirit a pleasant journey to the happy hunting-grounds."

"Don't get malanchully about it, old friend," said Nixon, laying his hand kindly upon Kosato's shoulder. "Leave all things with the Master o' Life. He knows what's best, and He makes that sort o' thing his peticerler business. I'm not jest the man I ought to be, myself, red-skin; but you may depend on 't, He

won't do anything wrong; it's naterally unposserble."

"The Strong Arm has spoken well," returned Kosato, in a low, impressive voice. "The Master of Life will not err."

"The human cretur as says to the contrary, I shall have *oncommon bizness with*," responded the trapper, striking his hand significantly upon the barrel of "Peticerler Death."

"We were speakin', Cap'en," he resumed, after a pause, "of the different systems o' finishin'; and I promised to illustrate the beauties of the death-in-the-mouth system; jest step this way. Now look at the feturs o' that rip-tile. You don't parceive no ugly wound to mar his nateral beauty, and cemetery of outline?"

"I see no deadly hurt," was my reply.

"And yit the cretur is naterally rubbed out."

"Certainly."

"Well, that's what I call *death in the mouth*."

Kosato gazed at the dead savage a moment, and then with a sorrowful shake of the head, and a dejected air, turned and walked toward the canoe, Nixon and myself following. In a few minutes we were once more skimming quietly down Salmon River, with no traces of the recent fight in view. Who could have looked at us and deemed that we had been so recently employed in the work of death, in the light of that pleasant morning?

## CHAPTER VII.

### SHOSHONIE ENCAMPMENT.

WE glided over the soft bosom of the water in silence, each seemingly absorbed in his own particular thoughts.

Occasionally the keen gray eyes of the trapper were fixed upon me with an inquiring and puzzled expression. He was obviously endeavoring to solve some problem, which interested him not a little. At length, in a tone of respect which convinced me that I had certainly risen in his estimation, he asked,

"Did I understand you to say, Cap'en, that you never fought the rip-tiles afore?"

"I think not; not to my recollection, at any rate."

"It's my notion that you're 'tarnal destruction to Injins."

"You flatter me."

"Not a bit of it; you're a modest, well-be-

haved young man; I knew it the minute I see you cut down that great, overgrown varmint. Perticerler death! what a blow you can give with that oncommon arm o' yours! Who'd ha' thought it? You're a nateral killer."

"I'm told that I fight very well in case of an emergency—when there's no chance to run away," I replied, somewhat dryly.

"You run?"

"When there's a chance.

"Come, Cap'en, none o' that. I'm gitten a leetle grain too old to be deceived in that style. I can tell sunthin' o' the nateral dispersion of a man by the cast o' his eye. It's my idee that you're a dangerous cretur. If it's no perticerler offence, I'd jest like to look at your arm for the vally of half a minnit or so."

There being nothing unreasonable in this request, I rolled up the sleeve of my hunting-shirt, bared my arm, and stretched it out.

The trapper examined it attentively, and laid his hand upon the rigid muscles.

"It's as white as a woman's, Cap'en; but it's all narve. The muscles feel like iron rods. You're a desperate cretur, notwithstanding the quiet sort o' way you have."

"Then I suppose you would n't object to my becoming your pupil."

"Not I; we'll commence on the *disablin' system*, and won't stop till we get to *death-in-the-mouth*. We'll go out airy some rainy mornin' afore breakfast, and captoore some half a dozern rip-tiles to *prac-tise* on."

We proceeded rapidly down the river, without stopping more than an hour or two at a time, for two days, when we considered ourselves beyond pursuit, or at least I did; but Kosato shook his head dubiously, and remarked that

"Blackfeet warriors were persevering, and followed their enemies for many days."

"That reminds me of a circumstance," said Nixon. "It was my misfortin' once to be the owner of a very venerable horse. I never larnt his age exactly; but it was sunthin' short of a century. The cretur had n't no teeth, and the oldest trappers did n't remember when he lost 'em. For the last few years he had subsisted on cracked corn, soaked and biled to his compacity o' munchin', and the delerate state of his digestive funktions. As for grass, he'd forgot what 't was made for, and contented himself with layin' on 't without any ruminisances

of other days. He'd been blind for the last ten years, when his former perprierter hired me to take him out o' the country. Findin' his eyes wa' n't of no sarvice to him, the interlectclal cretur shet 'em up to keep the dust out, and never pertended to open 'em, which give a malanchully expression to his countenance, and on the whole rayther injered his parsonal appearance. He was oncommon poor, was that hoss; the back-bone had worn through the nateral skin, and I used to hang my powder-horn and ball-pouch on the spurious prostitooters (spinous processes) when I went on the war-path, as the rip-tiles say, and the effect was highly picteresk. The hip and shoulder bones were in the same unpertected and unsheltered condition, and he never pertended to take 'em in when it rained; the marrer was stole out of 'em a few days afore I consented to take him, by a half-starved root-digger; but they were kind o' convenient-like, because I used to lay Perticerler Death across 'em, and there was n't no danger of its fallin' off: for Snorter—that was his name—was a proper easy-goin' cretur, and never rared up for'ards, and kicked up behind. He was an exemplerary beast, and wa' n't afeared o' nothin' under the canerpy o' heaven. He would n't turn out for nothin' on any consideration whatsoever; and I don't exaggerate, nor get out from under the redeemin' inference, when I say, that I've known that cretur to run agin five pine trees, four sycamores, two bears, and a catamount, one buffalor, and ten rocky mountains in succession, without gettin' discouraged or malanchully in the least. When I used to contemplate the subject philosopherspherically and discompassionately, I used to e'enermost believe in the parseverance o' the saints. My *tough cumstumble*, as the French say, when mounted and ready for a start, was argust and composin' in the extremities, when looked at in that pint o' view. Well, to make a long story short, and do justice to the manerfold virtues of Snorter. I was journeyin' through the country of the Bannecks, intending to make a brilliant dissent upon the bloody Blackfeet. All of a sudden, I heered a terrible clamor, and thought I was surrounded by the enemy. I instantly turned round toward the anermal's tail; for it was easier to do that than to turn Snorter, he was so mild-like, and moderate in his nateral dispersion. Without losing my presence o'



mind for a minnit, I begun sharp'nin' my knife on the hip-bones, when the danger seemed to threaten me right over head. Upon lookin' up into the air, the whole canerpy was swarmin' with crows, yellin' like all possest. I had a terrible presentiment o' danger as soon as my visible orgins fell on the feathered rip-tiles. For a short time or longer the cawin' was perfectly tremendous and astoundin'. I gin Snorter the rein, and, for the first time, turned my back upon the enemy. For six days and nights, without stoppin' to eat water, or drink meat, for man or hoss, I pressed forrard, bored up by the vain hope of escape. But it wa' n't of no avail; it was caw! caw! the whole contineral time; no sleep to my eyelids, or rest to my eyes. I was forced to give in, and leave Snorter to his fate. I jumped down from my gallant war-horse, leavin' all my things hung on to his framework. In half an hour there wa' n't nothin' left of him but his timbers. When the crows had gone, with a sad heart, I went and picked out my powder-horn, shot-bag, rifle, &c., &c., from among the venerable remains.

"Now the 'tarnal Blackfeet allers makes me think o' them crows; for when they once get on your track, they won't leave you."

Whatever fears either of us might have felt in regard to pursnit, they happily proved groundless. We reached the Shoshonie encampment, on Snake River, without accident.

I was glad to rejoin Meridine once more, and to find him convalescent. The kindness and careful nursing of the "Bending Willow" had not been without its reward. His noble heart palpitated with reciprocal joy as he held my hand in his, and uttered words of thanksgiving.

"I feared we should never meet again in this world," I said, when I had sufficiently mastered my emotions.

"We have passed one of those *crises*, or dark periods, which occasionally transpire in men's lives," he replied. "The clouds which overhung our destinies were dark, and the peril great; but thank Heaven, the skies have cleared, and the danger is past."

"You have suffered much; you look pale and emaciated."

"My wounds have been painful, it is true; but I have had a gentle ministry, and a tender nurse," he added, pointing to the "Bending Willow"

"This inactivity has been more tedious to bear than all else, for I knew you were in danger, and I could not go forth to your rescue."

"You are the same," I replied; "ever thoughtful of others and forgetful of yourself; ever generous and self-sacrificing!"

"Nonsense!"

"What a splendid creature!" I said, following with my eyes the graceful figure of the "Bend-Willow."

"That is not all, Malcolm; she is good also. The 'Bending Willow' has been to me as a sister."

"Beware," said I with a smile, "lest she win upon your heart too much."

"That cannot be. My affections are wedded to one in heaven. I can feel for her the purest friendship; but, alas! I can love no more. Emile absorbs all my thoughts. Not so with you; you have brought with you, from captivity and death, a new element, the element of an earthly love."

"The very words!" I exclaimed, with a start of surprise.

"The *very same*, and true as holy writ. I say not whether you have loved wisely or unwisely, for it is not given me to reveal all things," added Meridine.

"You change not, my friend; the same mystery envelops you. Speak to me more particularly of this subject of the influx of spiritual beings into our world; it overwhelms—it confounds me."

"Because the doctrine is new, and your mind has not grown familiar with it. Were you to exist in bodily form through the years of the next generation of men, it might be otherwise. These things would be brought near to you, and no longer be involved in doubt and uncertainty. The day is approaching when men will no longer doubt the existence of a spirit-world. The belief in the future will be no longer dreamy and indistinct, but clear and well-defined. Goodness and truth will be in the ascendant. Infidelity will be known no more, and its short and inglorious reign upon the earth will be ended, leaving behind no bright history of its sway. But deem not that all can call up the departed. As men rise in the scale of *goodness and truth*, in the same ratio are their gifts increased, and the interior senses unlocked. It is not in the province of all to commune with the dead. On



ly the strong, only the mighty in mind have this power. To the weak, to the sickly in intellect, are these gifts denied. Gifts are accorded according to capacity, and the aspirations of the mind after *goodness and truth*.

"But some men have great and fearful gifts. They are men of mighty intellects, who have made shipwreck of faith, and aspire not after the higher life. But these gifts have their *price*—their tremendous penalty. As a man sows, so shall he reap; and woe to the gifted ones who pervert their gifts, for in their great sin shall they find their punishment!"

"Do you believe in guardian spirits—blessed messengers who overshadow us at all times to do us good?"

"It is the deserving only who are supremely blessed; and happy is he who hath a spirit for his minister; whose angel voice is heard in the still night-time, and whose tranquilizing presence is felt during the busy day. It warns him of danger; it strengthens him against evil; it guides him, lest he dash his foot against a stone; it elevates his thoughts; it lifts him toward the better world. He lays aside his groveling nature, and half forgets his affinity to earth. His thoughts are full of schemes of universal benevolence and philanthropy."

"You have drawn a pleasing picture, Meridine; but can the spirit of evil be invoked, think you?"

"There is a limit, a boundary which must not be passed," replied Meridine, solemnly. "Attempt not that ordeal which evokes the spirit of evil from its gloomy *Tartarus*—its consuming *Gehenna*. Let the fearfully gifted stay his rash hand, and put not forth his power; his strength may fail, and his brain grow dizzy and mad in gazing down from the awful height of his impiety."

"Feeble is man, it is true, and his breath is in his nostrils, but great and fearful are his gifts. A drop of water may drown him, a breath of wind may blow out his candle of earthly life; yet he can move heaven and earth, and call the dead before him by the power of his will; but all these things have their *price*, and there is an *ordeal* to pass."

"I believe I catch some part of your meaning, yet I do not understand you fully. It seems to me that you have thought too much on this perplexing subject. Your mind is a little un-

settled; it wants rest, and should be made to flow in another channel. Long and unrelaxing study is full of danger to a mind like yours."

"A reply like that will answer very well when one has no strong arguments to bring forward; and that system of defence is frequently resorted to," replied Meridine, good-humoredly. "But will it convince me that I have not communicated with Emile—that I have not heard her voice—that I have not felt her hand upon my brow?"

"Most certainly not; neither do I wish for such a result," I answered.

"Why not generously acknowledge the guardianship of Emile at once, Malcolm. Has she not been with you? Has she not spoken to you words of heavenly consolation?"

"I have suffered myself to believe so at times; and then the most torturing doubts assail me. Emile *seemed* to be near me, and I *seemed* to hear her voice; but Heaven only knows whether I was sleeping or waking."

"You were awake, Malcolm, and you *know* it. I defy you to convince yourself to the contrary."

I made no reply, for I felt that what he affirmed was indeed true.

During this conversation Nixon had been a silent and attentive listener.

"Talkin' of sperits reminds me o' my own expeerence in that line," he said gravely, shaking the ashes from his pipe.

"Let us hear it," I said.

With the greatest pleasure, Cap'en. My father, you see, had been under the turf a great many years. He was n't a bad man by no means; a kinder heart never beat nor his; but he was uncommon fond o' terbaccer. He'd smoke the day out and the day in. He had n't an equal in that way except old Sam Flint, our nearest neighbor, and he was jest about his match; and they used to smoke and tell their tough stories evenin' after evenin'; but that was afore my father died.

"My nateral suscepterbilities being fine, I felt rayther bad when the old gentleman stepped out. I used to lay awake night arter night, and think on him. One night, in the fust o' the evenin', arter I had turned in, I heard a strange knockin' on the vinder-sill, and did n't know what on airth to make on 't.

"Who's there?" says I.

"Your father," says a voice.

"It can't be possible!" says I.

"It's nothin' shorter," says he.

"How do ye like as fur as you've got?" says I.

"I'm not over an' above pleased," says he.

"I'm sorry to hear it," says I. "What's the trouble?"

"It's e'nermost impossible to get any good smokin' terbaccer," says he, in a derjected voice.

"That 's malanchully," says I. "Can I do anythin' for ye?"

"Nothin' to brag on," says he; "but you'll obleege me by layin' a good piece o' pigtail on the winder-sill nights when you go to bed."

"I'll do it," says I.

"I'll feel obleeged," says he.

"Not at all," says I; "but if it's a fair question, I'd like to know how you pass your time up there?"

"It's no offence at all, sonny. I set on a sunbeam most o' the time, playin' on the jews-harp."

"It must be very amusin'," says I. "Have you got the old thing with ye?"

"I ain't got nothin' else," says he.

"Play us up a tune, then," I continued.

"With pleasure," says he; and so he struck up.

"That's rayther malanchully," says I.

"I know it," he said; "but it's all on account o' the terbaccer."

"I'll get ye some o' the *raal* pigtail," says I.

"So do, and I'll play ye somethin' livelier next time. Good night, sonny," he added, in a more cheerful tone.

"Come agin," says I.

"You may rely on 't," says he.

"Good night, then," says I. "Don't hurt yerself doin' the miserlaneous work, and I'd reccermend ye to bring a better instrument when you come agin." And with that the old gentleman hurried away.

"Did you place the pigtail on the window-sill?" I asked.

"In course I did—the *raal* ginewine."

"And did he come after it?"

"As reg'lar as the night came. I never knew him to fail, and an uncommon sight o' the stuff he made way with. If all my relations had come back, and used as much o' the weed as he did, I should ha' been dead broke."

"And what kind of tobacco did Sam Flint smoke at that time?" I continued.

"Pigtail—nothin' but pigtail, jest like that used by the old gentleman," said Nixon, with a look irresistibly comical.

"Nixon," said Meridine, somewhat sternly, "you are a kind-hearted, well-meaning man, but do not, I entreat of you, make light of such a subject. When you talk of such things, you are treading on ground unknown to you—sacred ground, that must not be profaned. Talk of hunting, trapping, or fighting, if you will, but on this theme be silent. It is easy to ridicule the most solemn and weighty subjects—much easier than to understand them. Prove all things, my worthy friend, and hold fast that which is good. Let fools laugh at that which they cannot fathom, but let wise men be silent."

"I'm not much under the redeemin' inference, Kernel, but that sounds nateral and right," and he proceeded to refill his pipe with perfect self-possession.

## CHAPTER VIII.

AS soon as Meridine was able to travel, the Shoshonie encampment was broken up. After a rapid journey, we reached the valley of the Grand Rond, where our lodges were once more reared.

Game was more plenty here, although we were much exposed to the depredations of the Blackfeet. We were soon made aware of this by having several horses stolen.

The Shoshonies grew more cautious for a few days, and then relaxed their extra vigilance, when the Blackfeet made a more successful demonstration than previously, and carried off a greater number of horses, and wounded one or two of those whose duty it was to keep "watch and ward."

The remaining horses were now picketed in another place, and several deep pits were dug near them, and carefully yet slightly covered with sticks and leaves. The object of this, as the reader will perceive, was to catch the marauders. The stratagem was successful. Several of the thieves were caught the following night. One of the offenders was set at liberty, in order to carry word to the main body, that if the missing horses were not returned before a given time, the rest of the captives should be



put to death without mercy. The stolen steeds were forthcoming before the expiration of the time specified, and there were great rejoicings among the Shoshonies thereat.

"How was it about your father's ghost?" I said one day to Nixon, when we were alone.

"The fact o' the case was," he replied, "I found it took off the change like all natur to keep my father in terbaccer, so I told Flint all about it, and axed him if he could n't supply the old man with a plug or two occasionally, for old acquaintance' sake.

"I could n't think of it," says he; "got a large famerly to support, and I use an awful sprinklin' o' the weed myself. But I've got a pound or two I'll sell ye *cheap*."

"What kind is it?" I asked.

"Pigtail," said he.

"Bring it over," says I.

"With pleasure," says he; and so the next day he brought it over, and I bought it. Well, come to look it over, I found some o' the indentical plugs which I had laid on the winder-sill for the old gentleman. Upon careful inquiry I larned that he'd sold several pounds o' the stuff to the neighbors, and seemed to have a plenty o' the same sort, although, afore that, he used to be hard up on terbaccer, for he was poor as Job, and an uncommon smoker. Arter that time I did n't lay any more plugs on the winder-sill, thinkin' it best to let the old gentleman depend on his own exartions for a supply o' pigtail."

"Many ghost stories would probably end in the same way if traced back to their true origin, I doubt not," I remarked.

"It's not unpossorble, Cap'en; but still I'm a leetle inclined to berlieve in sich things arter all. There's sunthin' inside of a man that tells him, when a poor human cretur dies, that ain't the end on't; and if that ain't the end on't, why may n't the sperit o' that same human cretur come back to us on extrordinor occasions. The Master o' Life may marcifully permit the immortal principul to visit the friends as it had known on airth while in the nateral body. I say that it don't seem to me that there is nothin' onreasonable in the idee. It's true I'm allers tellin' tough stories, and blunderin' into some kind o' nonsense, but as I'm a livin' man, I would n't deliberately and willin'ly make fun o' sich subjecks for no consideration whatsoever.

The Kernel was a leetle hard on me about that story, but I meant no sort o' disparagment to the sperit world, or the immortal creturs ginerally."

"I believe it," I answered. "And now, if you please, I wish to have some confidential discourse with you upon another subject."

"Free your mind, Cap'en."

"I will to the point at once. You know that I have been recently a prisoner among the Blackfeet."

"I seem to have some knowledge on 't."

"I escaped; and blessings on your kind heart, you know *how* I escaped."

"I recollect sunthin' about that subjeck."

"While I was a captive, a very beautiful girl showed me some kindness."

"That's rayther onnateral in the rip-tiles."

"I cannot forget that girl, and in short I love her."

"That's nateral, Cap'en. The female creturs will kind o' take hold on our feelins sometimes in spite of our better judgment."

"Her name is Minwawa."

"That means 'Pleasant Sound' in Injin."

"Well, as I have said, I love this Minwawa, Indian though she be. She is pleased with me also."

"That's not unlikely."

"I wish to make her my wife."

"Quite possorble, Cap'en; and as a consequence naterally want to get hold on her."

"Of course I must get her before I can make her my wife."

"And naterally want to ask my advice how you shall manage to git her away from her people."

"Exactly."

"That's a differcult question. The Blackfeet rip-tiles are uncommon cunnin', and it requires a great deal o' wisdom to carcumvent 'em. I surpose it would be naterally unpossorble for you to forgit the cretur?"

"No, Nixon, I cannot forget her. If you had seen her as I have, you would never have asked that question. The image of Minwawa can never be effaced from the tablets of memory. She is a real diamond among the rough stones of the field."

"And you naterally want to polish her?"

"Yes. I must snatch her from among her rude people, and teach her a better way; direct



her expanding mind towards the knowledge of a higher life. She is too beautiful, too pure and guileless, to dwell among savages."

"Have you spoke to the Kernel about it?"

"Meridine is acquainted with my feelings on this subject, but I have said nothing of my views in relation to taking her away from her people."

"It's my opinion it can be done, Cap'en," said Nixon, after a long pause; "but it's sunthin' as will be attended with a heap o' danger and difficulty. It'll require parseverance, cunning', and a sprinklin' o' courage; but I trust we've all got our share o' these ingregents. I am the man as is ready to sarve you to the death. I'll never desart a feller-cretur in distress. You may safely count me one in this expedition. The faet is I'm tired o' this inactive life, and I want to be movin'. But I wish to say to you aforehand, that if there's any percieerler shootin' to do, I'd like to be remembered."

"Many thanks, my friend, for your kind and generous offer of service. I will not prove ungrateful. It shall be my care that your reward shall bear some proportion to the importance of your aid."

"Percieerler death, Cap'en! what do I care for reward? I'd thank you not to speak o' them subjects in my presence. My name is Nixon. I'm an uncultervated, rough-spoken, unederccated cretur, but I don't want to be misunderstood. You parceive sunthin' a beatin' and pulsatin' like, under this here shirt! Well, that 's the heart of old Nixon, the free-trapper."

"A noble one it is, too, and whatever be its other sins, the sin of *meanness* it will not have to answer for. I will now see Kosato and Meridine, and if they enter into my plans, we will mature them together."

I soon had an opportunity of seeing the renegade alone.

"I wish to talk to you on an important subject," I said, seating myself near him, beneath the spreading branches of a sycamore.

"Let my white brother speak," replied the renegade.

"Since the night when you rescued me from death, my heart has been big toward you. I have been at a loss for words to express my gratitude. You are the preserver of my life, and as such, I esteem you. I shall cherish

your name and deeds until the sun of life goes out. The name of Kosato shall be associated with all that is good and noble."

"My white brother overwhelms his red friend with pleasant words. It makes his heart beat faster, and his blood flow better in his veins, to hear such good talk; but he feels that he does not deserve it. Tell Kosato what he can do for the pale-face to merit such friendship?"

"Merit it! do I not owe my life to you already? Cease, noble chieftain, to pain me with such language. Suffer me to discharge some part of the obligation without feeling it the less. You know well the use and value of money; allow me—"

"Hold!" cried Kosato, almost sternly; "will you not allow me to keep your friendship without forcing upon me your money, to wipe it away from my remembrance? Kosato, the renegade, wants no money. He can live without it. The friendship of his white brother is better. Money tarnishes the memory of good deeds, and kills friendship."

"Well, let it be. And now I will speak of a subject near my heart. While in captivity among your former people, a fair maiden came to me. Her face shone with benevolence, and her eyes were full of tears. She was very beautiful. Her kindly words fell upon my ears as the soft dew upon the tender grass. The Indian girl enslaved my heart. When I came away I left a part of myself there, and I must go back after it."

"What was the red maiden's name?"

"Minwawa—the 'Pleasant Sound.'"

"What does my white brother say?" exclaimed Kosato, with a sudden start.

"*Minwawa* is the Indian girl's name. Do you know her?" I asked, eagerly.

Kosato's momentary excitement of manner passed away as suddenly as it had appeared, and he was calm again, as usual.

"The Pleasant Sound is not unknown to the Blackfoot renegade. What does my white brother propose to do?"

"To wrest her away from her savage people, and make her his wife," I answered.

"How will he do it? The Blackfeet warriors are bold as the eagle, and cunning as the fox."

"It is on that very subject that he needs your advice and assistance."

"My brother shall have both, and Minwawa shall be his."

"It is well; I will not forget; and now I go to see Meridine, and then we will arrange our plans for future action."

I found Meridine in Kosato's lodge.

"I have been expecting you for the last half hour," he said, with a meaning look. "I know what you would say. You have come to talk of Minwawa."

"You have guessed right," I replied.

"You wish to take her away from her people, and make her your wife."

"You seem to read one's thoughts," Meridine."

"You have come to ask my assistance and advice as to the best method of kidnapping your Blackfoot beauty," he continued, with a smile.

"Right again; and as you appear to be aware of my intentions, be good enough to make known your feelings on the subject at once."

"I shall certainly aid you."

"Many thanks. I feared you would oppose me."

"It is possible I might have done so a few days ago; but now I am eager to engage in the undertaking."

"What has changed your mind in relation to this subject, if I may be allowed to ask?"

"I have taken counsel with one who is wiser than I."

"Emile!" I exclaimed.

"Even so; and I follow her instructions. She breathed words in my ear which I *must* not, shall not repeat. My interior consciousness has been opened to much that has been hidden hitherto. Suffice it, that I know my duty, and shall do it. Whither the angel voice of Emile urges, I go, be it to captivity, or be it to death. What matters it to me whether I live, or whether I die? Have I not the blessed consciousness of a life hereafter? and is it not better to become an inhabitant of the higher spheres, than to dwell in a world like this?"

"Undoubtedly; but I have not sought you these many months in order to send you to the higher spheres."

"I suppose not," he replied, his handsome face lighting up with a good-humored smile; "and I shall not expose myself to danger, be assured; for the world to me, with the faith I now have, is very bright and pleasant; it is no

longer wearisome, and the presence of the dwellers in other spheres sometimes makes it a paradise."

"Would to Heaven, Meridine, that I could receive your faith fully, implicitly. I feel assured that I should not become a worse or less useful man."

"I thank you for conceding so much, Malcolm. I feel authorized to tell you that none but the good, none but those who aspire after the higher life, can have perfect intercourse with the purified beings who inhabit the other world. Lead a pure and blameless life, and if you fervently seek communion with the departed, you shall not strive in vain. Everything is accomplished by effort, and nothing without."

"There is much truth in your last remark, undoubtedly."

At that moment Kosato and Nixon made their appearance.

"But to return to the matter in hand," continued Meridine, "here are our two friends and coadjutors. Let us confer with them."

"If you refer to the Cap'en's Blackfoot beauty, Kernel, my mind's already made up. I enter into his plans for better or for worse, for longer or for shorter."

"But what shall be our manner of proceeding, Nixon?"

"We must play Injin."

"I understand you. I suppose you mean that we shall disguise ourselves as Blackfoot warriors."

"Exactly; that's my meanin', Kernel."

"And Kosato, what thinks he?" I asked.

"That cretur's erpinion runs parallel with mine on this subjeck," replied Nixon, looking at the renegade, who sat calmly smoking his pipe.

The following day, four persons, resembling Blackfoot warriors in every respect, so far as externals were concerned, left the Shoshonie encampment. Who those four persons were, the reader will readily imagine. Kosato, of course, needed but little change to sustain the character which we had assumed; but how well the rest of us carried out the idea of a Blackfoot brave, I am not able to say. I know that I, for one, looked very much unlike my natural self.

Having learned from a party of Bannecks that the main party of the Blackfeet were still encamped where I had left them on the night



of my escape, we pursued our way in that direction.

We were to travel on horseback until within a certain distance of the object of pursuit, when our animals were to be left, and the rest of the distance accomplished on foot. In pursuance of this plan we pressed forward with all diligence. As we drew near the vicinage of the enemy, we grew more cautious.

Only those acquainted with life in the wide wilderness can form an adequate idea of the numberless artifices resorted to in order to avoid the prying eye of an enemy. This kind of strategy is known only to the backwoodsman and the red man.

Our horses were left behind; we drew near the camp of the dreaded Blackfeet—we slept in sight of their fires. *Slept* did I say? my friends might have slept, but I did not; my thoughts were full of Minwawa. I turned restless on my hard couch of leaves. A terrible feeling of suspense and anxiety racked my brain. I might utterly fail in my undertaking, and involve my comrades in danger, and perhaps death. I blamed myself that I did not attempt the dangerous mission alone. I cursed my cruel and unthinking selfishness. But it was now too late to retreat—the enterprise must go forward at all hazards. My gallant companions would scorn the thought of a retreat; they were too generous to forsake a friend in time of need.

I arose softly to my feet. The moon was shining gloriously, and by its light I saw my comrades sleeping calmly and peacefully as though no danger was near.

Occasionally the finely chiseled lips of Meridine moved in whispers, and glad smiles broke over them. As I gazed, a pale, soft light played for a moment across his brow; and the thought came to me that Emile was near—that she was speaking to him in ecstatic dreams. I turned from him with a sigh, and walked away.

It was an hour for solemn thought. No sound broke the stillness of the primal wilderness. The wind had died away to a breathless calm. The leaves did not tremble in the quiet air. The moonbeams lay like dark, softly defined shadows along the earth, where they found their way through the branches. No bird sent forth its notes of song. The prowling wolf and the hooting owl gave not their dismal voices to the night.

I moved away among the trees, led by a feeling I cannot analyze. I paused in an open space where the moonlight had free access. As I stood there with my arms folded upon my breast, I was startled to hear the sound of a voice, in all respects like a human voice. I recognized its tones, modified though they were to the sweetness of an angel-harp. I had heard it before; it was Emile that spoke.

"Henry," she said, "I have come to speak to you once more, that you may henceforth feel the consolations of a better faith. I have been near you a thousand, thousand times when you knew it not. I have heard your words; I have traced your thoughts; I have touched you with my hands; I have spoken to you; and yet you have doubted. You have struggled blindly against the conviction of all your senses. If, at any moment, you have believed, you have feared to utter your faith, because it might be deemed strange and startling. You shall doubt no longer. I will convince all your senses; and henceforth you may live in the assurance of an existence in a happier sphere—a country of eternal progression, where the elevated soul dwells in the fullness of joy forever. Stretch forth your hand; by appropriating certain electrical properties of the atmosphere, I will make myself perceptible to the sense of seeing and the sense of touch, as well as that of hearing."

With a feeling of exaltation amounting to ecstasy, I stretched forth my hand. I was awed, but not fearful; I was too much carried out of my earthly self to feel the tooth of fear.

"I will place my hand in yours," continued Emile, "or one like that you knew as mine in former months. Shrink not, tremble not; for I will not harm you. I came not hither to be a minister of evil; for my mission is one of *goodness, purity, and truth.*"

A hand was laid in mine, soft, white, delicate, as had been the hand of Emile. It was warm and human-like in its touch, and the graceful, taper fingers grasped mine with a friendly pressure, as it had done in life. And then it flashed before my eyes in the beauty of its immortal youth, with an arm divine in its symmetry, and glorious in its perfection. It pressed my brow, my face, my lips, and with the touch came the full conviction of the doctrine of spiritual correspondence,—exalting, purifying, and ennobling in its nature.



"Now do you reap the first joys of an expanded faith?" continued the celestial voice of Emile. "This much has the Governor of the universe permitted. He grants these revelations to man for his consolation, and intellectual elevation. To *all* this is not given, because they aspire not for the truth; their affinities for the earth they dwell on being stronger than their affinity to the spheres above them, where spirit reigns triumphant over matter. It is granted to the pure to commune with their friends who have passed the change of death. Go thou and reap the divine joys of that belief. \* \* \* \* I shall appeal to your external senses no more; but there shall be periods in your life, (and those periods shall be when you most earnestly desire it, and have purified your thoughts,) when a correspondence shall take place between us, perfectly plain and comprehensible. I know well why you have come hither. It is even as I told you: a 'Pleasant Sound' has lured you into danger; but I will befriended you—I am permitted to do so. Follow my voice, and I will lead you to her whom you seek; this way, through the vista in the trees. Tread lightly, and fear not, for the ægis of heaven is over you this night."

An atmosphere of strange lucidity played about me. I breathed it, and seemed to respire the elements of a new and higher order of existence. I moved toward the Indian encampment like one walking upon air, while I heard the voice of Emile chanting words like the following:

"In the moonbeams dancing,  
Through the soft air glancing,  
I guide thee this night;  
Follow then fearless,  
Hopeful, not cheerless;  
I guard thee till light.

No hand shall disarm thee,  
No power shall harm thee,  
While spirits attend;  
Though foes slumber lightly,  
And the moon shines brightly,  
I still will defend."

"You will be happy with this child of nature," added the voice, as I neared the encampment. "Your days shall flow away like the waters of a tranquil river. But deem not that an earthly love shall be attended with perfect bliss; it has its momentary clouds as well as its days of sunshine and brightness. In the ecstasy of this

new passion, forget not your affinity to heaven. Remember me, and the words I have spoken. Teach this simple Indian maiden the true philosophy of life. Watch over her as over a beautiful and tender wild-plant, transplanted from its native valley. The flowers of her mind will bud and blossom, and reward your care; and you will have fitted a human soul for the enjoyment of the higher life. Now follow boldly. She whom you seek sits in the door of her father's lodge; but she will gladly, joyously follow the white stranger. Delay not to fly from this place with all speed, for these red children will soon be in arms. My present ministry will cease at dawn."

I was now in the midst of the Blackfoot lodges. I saw grim warriors on every hand, locked in the embraces of sleep. I followed my conductress to the lodge of Sagonda.

To my joy Minwawa sat at the entrance. With an expression of pleasure indescribable she recognized me, arose without a word, placed her trembling hand in mine, and we walked away in silence.

"And now the daughter of the wilderness is thine. She has left her home and her people for thee, and see that thou art faithful to thy trust. Lose no time—awake thy comrades, and fly hence," whispered the sweet voice once more.

With Minwawa by my side I hastened from the encampment, gliding unnoticed by the sleeping figures of the red sons of the forest.

When I had left the dangerous vicinage some distance behind, I gave vent to my pent-up emotions—strained the peerless daughter of the wilderness to my bosom, and kissed the first kiss of love upon her lips.

I would fain dwell upon those happy moments in my life; but I cannot—I have not words—they would fail to convey my meaning. Let it pass—let the curtain of silence fall upon scenes too bright for earth. It would be mockery, sacrilege, to do otherwise, however dear such precious memories may be. The wild, beautiful flower, which had shot forth in the wilderness, was mine, and would henceforth shed its fragrance for me alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

I awoke my friends, and when the first moments of surprise were passed, we commenced our return. It was then that I learned for the

first time that Minwawa was a sister of the Bending Willow. I had never seen the noble features of Kosato, the renegade, more expressive of happiness and contentment. His face seemed to shine with joy as he gazed at us, and read the evidences of our mutual bliss.

We reached the spot where we had left our horses, and my treasure was borne in safety to the Shoshonie encampment. After resting a few days, we proceeded to Fort Walla-Walla, where a wedding was celebrated with great feasting and rejoicing.

"It's very strange to me, Cap'en," said Nixon, "how you managed to git the cretur away from the rip-tiles. It's allers been a mystery to me, and the more I think on't, the more I'm puzzled. I'd naterally like to know how it was done."

I made no reply, for I knew not what to say.

"I hope, Cap'en, (no offence to ye,) that you ain't entirely clear of the redeemin' inference," he added, gravely.

"I hope and trust, my good friend, that I have not sold myself to Satan."

"I hope not, Cap'en, but it would n't be the fust instance where a chap has lost his nateral soul for a harnsum woman."

"Then you think she is really handsome?" I said, with a smile, as the person in question made her appearance, and greeted the trapper with a sunny smile.

"Harnsum! God bless her, Cap'en, she could n't be no harnsumer. I'd almost be willin' to endanger my own immortal principul for another sich a cretur. But I'd advise ye to have a few prayers said, and make use of all the means o' grace, for it's posserble you may be able to cheat the great enemy o' souls in

the long run. The redeemin' inference is strong."

"Do not fear for the eternal safety of my friend," said Meridine. "He has not, I assure you, endangered his soul. But he no longer rejects the doctrine of a correspondence between the dwellers in the two worlds."

"Perticerler death! a man with a purty female by his side can believe anythin'," returned Nixon. "Depend on 't, I shall stick by ye, and see how long the illoosion will naterally last."

"I shall not part company with you while we sojourn in the wilderness, be assured; and I hope that will be a long time."

"I'm obleeged to ye; and I'll teach you the death-in-the-mouth system," he added, looking roguishly at the ripe lips of Minwawa.

"And the disabling system also, I suppose," said Meridine, humorously.

"In course—quite naterally," rejoined the trapper.

"To-day Kosato is happy in beholding the happiness of his white brother," said the renegade. "May you be as light-hearted as to-day until you journey to the land of souls."

"And I repeat the chieftain's wish," added the Bending Willow.

Reader, my wild story is told. Though it seem dreamy and improbable, deem not that it may not have some portions of truth woven into its fabric.

I lead a pleasant life with my Indian girl, and envy no man. Meridine is with me.—Though the sources of his enjoyment may be a mystery to others, it is none to me. The name of Emile is dear to us. We hear her voice often in the still chambers of the soul; and in her teachings there is the fullness of joy.



# CLEMENCE DE LA FAILLE.

FROM THE FRENCH OF FREDERIC SOULIE.

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BY THOMAS WILLIAMS, ESQ.

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**A**T Toulouse, about the year 17—, an acquaintance of so intimate a nature had been formed between M. de Garran and the family of M. de La Faille, as to induce people to believe that it would soon be followed by an alliance. In fact, M. de Garran, a captain in the — regiment of artillery, was a young man of very pleasing deportment, who wore his epaulette gracefully, whether on the field of battle, on parade, or in a ball-room, speaking fluently and never of himself, performing his military duties better than those who applied themselves more sedulously to them, a man of well-informed mind, and above all, reputed to be a gentleman by birth, in a city where people are considered as mere *parvenus* after two hundred years of nobility. On his side, M. de La Faille was a grave and honest magistrate. Born with a timid mind but an upright soul, he would not have allowed the change of a single word in the avengful code which he had studied, and yet never had he put any one to the torture. He was, moreover, a man of perfect manners, never speaking in society of the affairs of the Court of Justice, nor in the Court of the affairs of the world. He was a widower, and had but one child, a daughter whose name was Clemence. Mademoiselle de La Faille was one of those persons possessing so exquisite a form, that

they are called handsome even when they are ugly; but far from that, Clemence had a face of such pure and graceful beauty that it made admirers forget that of her form; and it appeared that they had said all that could be said with regard to her, when they had spoken of her angelic features. All relative circumstances appeared to insure the marriage of M. de Garran and Madlle. de La Faille; their birth and their fortunes were about equal, and their ages were perfectly suitable. At the time of which we are speaking, Clemence was fifteen, and George, which was M. de Garran's Christian name, was twenty-five.

However, some women, among those who have the pretension of being wonderfully acute, asserted that there existed, between the two young people, differences of opinion and of feeling which would bring about some rupture between them before the marriage, or some direful misfortune after it. They said that the equitable disposition of George would but ill agree with the energetic soul of Clemence; that it would assuredly happen that M. de Garran, the guarded and decorous man, beyond all others, would sometimes feel himself wounded by the boldness of language of Mademoiselle de La Faille, and often by her forgetfulness of that modest reserve, which appears to be the duty,

and which is nothing more than the first principle of coquetry, in women. But those who believed that they had profoundly observed these two characters had gone no farther than the surface, and not one of them had divined that it was George who possessed an impassioned soul and an ardent mind, and Clemence a timid mind and a submissive soul.

Notwithstanding this, they had imagined rightly when they said that the marriage would soon take place. M. de Garrañ had in fact already submitted his proposals to M. de La Faille, and they had been accepted. George had already all the rights of an accepted lover; every Sunday, after having attended mass in the church of La Daurade, he left to his lieutenant the care of leading his company back to their quarters, and then went to make his bow to Monsieur de La Faille and Clemence, who would take his arm, and they then would proceed to the public promenade, for a walk. There was something graceful, at the same time solemn, in seeing them thus united. A virtuous love in two chaste souls, accompanied by such enchanting beauty; a young girl, almost a child, leaning with confidence, and under her father's eye, upon the arm of so young a man, but who had already distinguished himself, and who was capable of insuring the happiness of a woman; it was a sweet sight, one of those harmonies which raise humanity and console us for its disgusts; it was a chaste though impassioned picture, which all eyes dwelt upon, and which each family pointed to, without daring to hope for such. Their marriage was awaited as a festival for the city.

Certain of the consent of Mademoiselle de La Faille, assured of being beloved by Clemence, who had become too timid to tell him so, George was preparing to obtain the consent of his mother, who resided in Paris, when an incident occurred, the most wretched of all those which could annihilate the happiness of a man; this was an order from the minister to despatch to India the regiment in which George served,—an event which at once overthrew all these hopes and destroyed this perfect union.

One morning, at a much earlier hour than he was accustomed to call, M. de Garrañ reached the house of M. de La Faille, who was with Clemence, and announced to them the appalling intelligence. The grief of George was despairing, that of Clemence was heart-rending and

profound; M. de La Faille himself appeared annihilated.

After the first shock attendant on so frightful a misfortune, they endeavored to contend against it; George spoke of hastening the marriage, and of taking Clemence with him, if she would consent to accompany him. M. de La Faille could not admit the idea of being separated from his daughter, and sending her to a distance of thousands of leagues from her country, to a climate which in those days was considered murderous, exposed there to die, or to see her husband die beside her, and there remain without asylum or protection. It was not to be thought of. George also wished to throw up his commission and renounce his profession; this showed but little knowledge of M. de La Faille, who treated this proposal as the folly of a young man, and declared that he should consider himself responsible to M. de Garrañ's family for such a resolution. At last George endeavored, as a last hope, to persuade the rigid magistrate to give him his daughter's hand, and to keep her with him until his return, which was to take place in two years. But M. de La Faille would not listen to this arrangement, for from the first word he had heard of the untoward intelligence, he had formed an unalterable resolution. When he had the opportunity of combating with solid reasoning the despair into which both George and Clemence were plunged, he represented to them that they were both very young and could wait, that two years counted but little in a life, that this absence would but serve as a trial to their affection, and finally, that such was his inexorable will. It was necessary to obey. George did so with fearful resignation, Clemence with elevated sorrow, as if she had been able to find some consolation in struggling against a misfortune to overcome it,—as if she had hoped that her love would be more dear and more heroic in the eyes of George, after their two years' suspense and separation.

M. de La Faille acted as a sensible man in forming the resolution which he imposed on his two children; but he failed in knowledge of the heart when, after having assured himself of their obedience, he did not leave them a moment to themselves. He did not comprehend that between them there were tears to shed and words to be uttered, which, though undoubtedly innocent in themselves, he ought neither to see nor



hear; a mere nothing perhaps,—one of those holy emotions of pure young love, for which the soul demands as much mystery as for the more burning passions; an oath to be pronounced, eyes fixed on eyes, hands clasped in hands; a tender expression ventured on for the first and the last time; nothing more than these words perhaps: “Wilt thou love me, Clemence?” “I will love thee, George!”—even less than this: but he owed them this moment of ineffable grief, for the outpouring of their last adieu. He did not grant it to them, and they remained silent side by side. Thus, when it was necessary they should separate, George, overwhelmed by that which he had not been able to utter, forgot his respect for the sacred duties of honor, and whispered to the hapless Clemence these words, which were at once an order and a prayer:

“To-night, at twelve, in the garden.”

She looked at him and saw that he was pale and heart-broken, and in the same tone she replied:

“I will be there.”

From the tranquil manner in which they left each other, M. de La Faille ought to have guessed that they were to meet again. He failed in knowledge of the soul, and did not entertain the slightest suspicion.

The appointed hour having arrived, Clemence went down into the garden, and—must we acknowledge it?—almost happy at having to endure remorse, desirous even of the emotions of a secret and perhaps guilty love; for she knew no other crime than that of disobeying her father. George, on the contrary, came there with repentance in his heart, for he knew all the dangers of such a meeting.

They met each other with trembling steps, and for some time knew not what to say to each other. At length they spoke of their cruel separation and the solitude in which they were about to live. They conversed much on the manner in which they should occupy their time, and they agreed how they would employ it day by day during the whole of two years. They appointed particular hours in each night, at which they were to think of each other, and then they agreed to think of each other unceasingly, which was a more certain method of insuring that their thoughts would be simultaneous.

During this conversation the moon had risen above the horizon, the night was calm, and the air balmy and perfumed; they seated themselves beneath a tree around which had twined clusters of flowering honeysuckle, and insensibly silence overcame them both. Clemence seemed entranced in delightful revery—George could no longer command his feelings. They were seated gently pressed against each other upon a narrow bench: Clemence, motionless, her head east down, was weeping without suffering; George trembled from head to foot; he was palpitating, almost breathless; he gazed upon his beautiful betrothed; the moon’s rays were playing on her features; he fell upon his knees before her.

“Do you love me?” cried he.

“God is my witness,” she gently replied, “that I love you more than my own life.”

This simple answer, this appeal to the Divinity, protected the innocent girl, for instantly George, as if struck by a sudden warning, rose from his knees saying—

“Well, then! adieu! adieu!”

“Already!” sorrowfully cried Clemence.

“It must be so,” replied George; “my reason wanders while I remain near you. O, do not detain me—let me fly—look not thus at me—adieu! adieu! Let us part innocent, that we may meet again without a blush.”

Doubtless Clemence could not in any way comprehend the affright depicted in George’s agitated features; but she felt that the expression of her love had been much less fervent than this passionate accent. She feared to appear cold in comparison to his delirium, and it was doubtless this feeling which, at the moment George placed a burning but solitary kiss upon her lips, inspired her to utter these singular words:

“O George! were I even dead, your kisses would restore me to life.”

With these words they separated.

\* \* \* \* \*

Four years had flown by since the period we have written of, when George, who had landed at Brest some days before, took the road for Paris, and arrived at his mother’s house on the 5th of June, 17—. He had taken care to have his return announced to her by some friends; therefore, when she saw him, it was with pure and perfect joy, unmixed with either alarm or

astonishment; for George had been wounded, had been a prisoner, and for a long time had been reported dead. George's happiness was also very great; but notwithstanding this, after the first moments given to the tumultuous feelings of such a meeting, M<sup>me</sup>. de Garran observed a singular gloominess in George's looks, a deep preoccupation in his replies. She questioned him upon it, and he excused himself from answering; she, with anxiety, persisted; the son, to calm her, thus acknowledged to her the cause of his extraordinary melancholy :

"It is a puerility, dear mother, a folly unworthy of a man; but, since you imagine that my sorrow had some serious cause, I must reassure you, even were it to make me appear ridiculous. Imagine to yourself that as I was passing by the church of Saint-Germain des Pres, I observed that it was completely hung with black and ornamented for some rich funeral. This is assuredly a very common occurrence, and one which would scarcely have attracted the attention of a child; well! the aspect of this church struck me to the heart; I know not why, but I seemed to read in it a fatal warning of misfortune. You smile, and you are right! But three years of captivity and of horrible sufferings have rendered grief so familiar to me, that I fear everything since I have once more become happy."

"This is a feeling which proves to me that you love happiness, since you fear to lose it," replied his mother; "but the habit of enjoying it will soon restore you to comfort. As to the funeral you speak of, it must be that of the beautiful M<sup>me</sup>. de Servins, the wife of the President of the chambers of Assistants, who died yesterday after an illness of scarcely three days."

"The beautiful M<sup>me</sup>. de Servins!" said George; "she must, then, have been very beautiful to be so designated?" "Undoubtedly," replied M<sup>me</sup>. de Garran, "and so eminently, that she was renowned for it everywhere, and even at Toulouse, her native place, she was never spoken of, but as the beautiful Mademoiselle de La Faille."

This revelation, at once so plain and so abrupt, of such a dreadful misfortune, did not, in the first instance, clearly and forcibly strike the mind of George. He looked at his mother with more surprise than terror, and made her repeat

to him the phrase he had just heard. Madame de Garran then remembering that he had resided at Toulouse, and imagining that he might have known Clemence, used more precaution in her reply; but when she repeated the name of M<sup>lle</sup>. de La Faille, George fell to the ground close by her, as a man struck to the heart by an unforeseen and mortal blow. His eyes opened and shut rapidly like those of a person in convulsions, a livid paleness covered his whole face, his breathing was suspended in motionless suffocation, and doubtless he would have died on the spot had not his despair at length found vent in dreadful screams and frightful sobs.

The love of a mother must indeed be very ingenious, since it at last succeeded in calming so violent a grief. It was by speaking much of Clemence that she induced him to listen to her, and strange to say, she was compelled to console the unhappy George, rather for the unfaithfulness of Clemence than for her death. Then she explained to him that reports having been spread throughout France of his captivity and death, the unfortunate M<sup>lle</sup>. de La Faille had doubtless been apprised of them; she made him comprehend, that, after many tears and great resistance, Clemence had no doubt been compelled to obey the orders of her father; and all this was so natural, that, while merely inventing a story to compose him, Madame de Garran spoke the truth. In fine, she threw in as a salutary balm to his afflicted soul, that it was perhaps the grief caused by George's death, and the forced union, which had brought M<sup>me</sup>. de Servins to so untimely a grave; and with the admirable tact of a woman, it was by flattering George's misfortune with the supposition of death suffered through love for him that she at last allayed the bitterness of his sorrow.

However, after having long listened to his mother, and having long wept in her arms, George once more became silent, not as a man who resigns himself to his grief, but with the agitation of a mind which conceives a project, discusses it, and determines on its execution. M<sup>me</sup>. de Garran was anxiously following, on her son's features, the workings of his soul. Perhaps, had he but once only raised his eyes upon her with an expression of despair, she might have experienced the dread that he was meditating suicide; but she divined from his agitation that he thought not of it, for had



George formed such a design he would have been calm : she therefore did not fear to allow his grief the consolation that she had suggested. Toward evening, she saw him take a large quantity of gold, more than would have been necessary to purchase weapons, enough perhaps for a journey. She however made no observation, knowing that to oppose him would be only irritating his despair.

George left the hotel de Garraan after night had closed in ; he directed his steps towards the church of Saint-Germain des Pres, and learned from the beadle there, the place in which M<sup>de</sup>. de Servins had been interred. He went to the cemetery to which he had been directed, and woke the keeper. It was not without surprise that the latter saw a man whose appearance announced that he belonged to the upper class of society, and still more when that man proposed to him to commit a crime, a sacrilege. George asked him to raise the earth which covered the body of Clemence, to deliver her coffin to him, to allow him to break it open, and to let him look upon the corpse of her whom he had so much loved. There then arose between them a long and painful discussion, for the gold offered by handsful by George had not overcome the fears or scruples of the poor grave-digger. It was a moment of frightful despair to the young man, when he found that the venality on which he had calculated failed to aid him in his dismal project, and it was in this despair, however, that he found the means of success. It was then he fell upon his knees before the keeper of the cemetery, that he implored him with heart-rending sobs, bathed his hands with bitter tears, and rolled at his feet, wounding his head against the corners of the furniture ; it was then he became mad, furious, threatening and supplicating by turns ; it was then that he caused that hard and worn-out soul to weep, and that he received from his pity the consolation which he could not at any price have purchased.

When all was agreed upon between them, they went into the cemetery, the keeper armed with a spade and a wrench, and George carrying a lantern. If this were not a true relation of an avowed fact, there would at this period of the story be an opportunity to dramatize the scene, whether, by adopting the old method, I should make you feel, one by one, every pulsation of poor George's heart ; or whether, by fol-

lowing the new system, I should make you hear the hollow sound of every stroke of the pickaxe ; I might suspend the interest to the extremity of some ten thrilling paragraphs, and then wind up all with an appalling clap of thunder. The least that could be permitted me would be to clothe this night in dark and ominous clouds, interspersed with vivid forked lightnings ; but the pure truth is, that the moon, brilliant and calm, illuminated this terrific ceremony, and that not a word was uttered by either George or his accomplice until the coffin withdrawn from the grave was deposited upon its brink. One only frightful circumstance terrified George ; it was the first blow struck by the keeper upon the coffin-lid in order to break it open. It appeared to him that this was done with too much brutality ; and as at the noise several dogs at a distance were awakened and began to howl, he in a trembling voice requested the grave-digger to separate the planks as noiselessly as possible. The latter obeyed, and soon the body of Clemence was lying on the grass, covered only by its shroud. The silent keeper seating himself upon the ground, his legs hanging in the empty grave, looked at George, who remained petrified beside that icy corpse ; and seeing that he remained motionless, he could not avoid saying to him,

" Well ! she is there ! "

But George appeared to have forgotten his purpose in coming there. He did not hear ; his fixed eyes saw nothing, his thought comprehended nothing ; all his senses were in a complete state of suspense. The grave-digger himself becoming in his turn alarmed, after having several times spoken to him without receiving any answer, fearing even to touch him, fearing that he would stagger and fall at the least movement, ventured, in order to draw George from his long fit of abstraction, to raise the shroud which covered M<sup>de</sup>. de Servins, and to show her face to him who had done so much to see it.

The effect of a talisman could not have been more magical. At the aspect of that adored face, the perfection of which even death itself had spared, the soul of the unhappy lover at once melted. He fell on his knees beside the corpse, and amid tears and groans he spoke to her of love, accused himself of her death and entreated her forgiveness, and then spoke of their past days and their lost hopes : and to speak thus to her, he had raised her up and

placed her upon his knee, and mournfully gazed upon her. George's delirium appeared destined to have no end, when suddenly a thought rose in his mind, a recollection traversed like lightning all this storm of grief, and the last words uttered to him by those ice-cold lips suddenly resounded in his ears. He shrieks, and in the insensate transport of a hope still more insensate, he clasps Clemence in his arms and imprints on her dead lips the kiss which she had once said would restore her to life.

Immediately after giving her this kiss, George uttered a frightful shriek, then was seized with a convulsive trembling, and laughed as he had been a maniac; then with a movement, rapid as the lightning, he bounded up, still holding the corpse in a close embrace, threw his cloak over it, cast a terrified glance around him, and fled among the tombs, leaping over every obstacle, and uttering cries of delirious joy or savage grief. He at length escaped the pursuit of the keeper of the cemetery, with a rapidity and strength altogether supernatural, the poor man gazing after him as he disappeared like a tiger carrying off his prey.

Then the poor grave-digger hastened to efface the traces of his sacrilege: he replaced the empty coffin in the grave, threw over the earth which had already covered it, and hastened into his house, terrified at the crime he had committed, and anxiously awaiting the return of day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Five whole years had elapsed since that fatal night, when the following event occurred, without anything happening, in the meantime, to induce the grave-digger to imagine that the disappearance of Madame de Servins' body would be attended with any unfavorable result to himself.

It was the anniversary of the death of Clemence, and her husband, M. de Servins, was on his knees praying by the side of his wife's tomb. At some distance from him stood the keeper of the cemetery observing him with a deep feeling of reverence, as if he reproached himself for deceiving this virtuous grief by allowing it to weep over an empty grave. They were both of them deeply absorbed in thought, when a slight noise made them raise their heads, and a woman immediately presented herself before them.—That woman is Clemence, Mdme. de Servins,—it is the so-long lamented wife,—it is the sepulchred body! M. de Servins springs to his feet

uttering a cry: the unhappy grave-digger falls inanimate to the ground. But the unknown has also looked at the man who had so suddenly sprang up before her, and in her turn she screams with affright and flies as if struck with insanity. M. de Servins pursues without being able to overtake her, and at the cemetery gate he sees her dart into a rich carriage, which bears her off with all the speed of two magnificent horses.

An hour after this meeting, M. de Servins was still in the room of the miserable grave-digger, who expired in horrible convulsions without being able to reply to a single question that was addressed to him. And during the day the lieutenant-general of police acquainted the magistrate that, from the indications he had given to his agents, they had assured themselves that the carriage he had seen and the liveries he had described were those of M. de Garran.

The following day, upon the demand of M. de Servins, they proceeded to inspect the grave in which Clemence had been inhumed, and the coffin was discovered empty and broken open.

During this time Mdme. Julie de Garran, a young and lovely person, whom George had brought back with him from India, where he had married her, had returned home in indescribable agitation; she had gone up, pale and trembling, to her husband's room, and had remained there a great length of time. However, she came out from it calmer and reassured, and nothing was changed in the usual mode of life of M. and Mdme. de Garran.

More than fifteen days had passed since this event, without its being at all talked of in the world, and during which time M. de Servins surrounded them with spies. He ascertained at the War-Office the date of George's former arrival at Paris, and that of his departure. He hunted out the postillion who had driven him to Brest, accompanied by a veiled lady. He knew that he had embarked with her on board a vessel, of which he had obtained the log-book, and armed with these terrible proofs he commenced a suit against M. de Garran to compel him, as well as his pretended wife, to annul the illegal marriage which he had contracted with her. The novelty of this cause excited universal attention. Pamphlets were written by the faculty to prove that lethargy might have induced the belief of an apparent death. Those who sus-



tained this argument were treated as ignoramuses and simpletons by their professional brethren. They calculated the hours during which M<sup>de</sup>. de Servins would have lived in that state, and it was found that no author had ever given an instance of so prolonged a lethargy. M. de Garran himself appeared to compassionate M. de Servins, and when he said that the resemblance of his wife with M<sup>lle</sup>. de La Faille had even terrified himself, but not to such a degree as to make him partially insane, he uttered the words with so truthful an accent, that people did not doubt that M. de Servins had lost his senses, or that the whole accusation, from first to last, was but a game that he was playing.

The cause, however, at last came before the tribunals, and Madame de Garran was obliged to appear and reply to the questions of the judges. She was confronted with M. de Servins, and appeared much amazed at all he said. M. de La Faille came from Toulouse and wept bitterly on seeing this strange resemblance. He knew not how to address this woman, who seemed to him to be his daughter and who so coldly denied it. The astounded judges looked at each other, undecided and confused. Madame de Garran related the history of her whole life. She was an orphan, and had always resided in India. Documents were produced attesting that a demoiselle Julie de Merval, born at Pondicherry, had there married Colonel de Garran.

The day of solemn audience, that on which judgment was to be pronounced, at length arrived. All the pleadings had been terminated, and the members of Parliament who composed the tribunal appeared disposed to free M. de Garran from the singular prosecution directed against him and his wife, when M. de Servins entered the court, leading a child by the hand. Madame de Garran was at that moment seated beside her solicitor, M. Moizas; and as the throng was prodigious, she had leaned her head upon her hand to conceal her face from the eager gaze of the crowd, and for this reason she had not observed the entrance of M. de Servins; but suddenly she felt a little hand pulling at hers, and heard a child's voice saying sorrowfully to her,

"Kiss me, mamma."

Madame de Garran immediately raised her

head, recognized the child, and without uttering a word, took it in her arms and covered it at once with tears and kisses. The wife and the daughter had resisted; the mother had betrayed herself.

From that moment, although the suit was not terminated, it assumed a totally different aspect. M. de Garran's counsel in his turn demanded the legal dissolution of a marriage which death itself had broken. "Do not ask," said he with burning eloquence, "do not ask of the grave that which you gave to it; leave this living woman to him who is the cause of her now living; that tangible existence belongs alone to him, and you with right can only claim a corpse." All was useless: Clemence requested she might retire to a convent, but this was not consented to, and a solemn decree condemned her to return to the abode of her first husband.

Some days after this judgment was pronounced she did in fact return there, attired in white, and pale from despair and resolution. On entering the drawing-room where M. de Servins, surrounded by all his family, was awaiting her, she fell rigid and cold upon the floor. They hastened to raise her up, but it was only to hear these few words—

"I have brought you back that which you lost!"—and she expired.

She had taken poison before leaving her own residence.

M. de Garran, under the care of his mother, died only the following day.

## AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN.

BY H. G. CHIPMAN.

**L**ATE in the fall of 1830, Grand Prairie, in Illinois, was burned over one night, and an immense amount of damage done to the farmers living in and along its edge. Numerous fences were destroyed, and crops of corn, ready for the gathering, were laid waste; while numberless stacks of grain and hay, put up for the winter's use, were set on fire, and burned to the ground. The havoc was worse because of the conflagration's coming suddenly and quite unexpectedly, as when the night came on no fire was discernable, and such burnings were inva-

riably perceivable long before night set in, warning the farmers to be prepared. But the evening of this catastrophe, when the sun went down, and darkness covered the prairie, no smoke arose from the southern edge of the plain, nor could any lurid glare be seen resting upon the sky, to indicate the grass was on fire; and as it generally took a whole night for the flames to cross the prairie, all the farmers living on the northern edge retired to their beds in apparent security. But in the middle of the night many of them were aroused to find their fences on fire, their habitations surrounded by flames, and, in some instances, even the houses in a bright blaze, from which they with difficulty escaped alive. A farmer—whose family was composed of a wife and only daughter, the latter some seventeen years of age—who resided some six miles in the prairie, had his house destroyed, while himself and wife perished in the ruins. The daughter was saved by the daring energies of a young man named Clyde, who had discovered the fire, and arrived just in time to tear her from the building ere the roof fell in.

The morning after the conflagration, the inhabitants of the little village of Bluffton, situated on the edge of the plain, were set in commotion by rumors of the fire being the work of some heartless scoundrel, who had thus gratified his malice upon some individual, by injuring the entire community. These rumors at length became a fixed fact; as, about 10 o'clock, a man named Gray, a roving character, with no ostensible means of livelihood, appeared before the squire of the village, and stated that he wished a warrant issued for the apprehension of David Clyde, for setting the prairie on fire the previous evening, by which so much waste of property, and wanton sacrifice of lives, had occurred.

The warrant was issued, and placed in the hands of a constable for serving; and while this official was absent in search of Clyde, the young man himself came into the squire's office, and entered a like complaint against Gray, but was informed that Gray had first appeared, and obtained a warrant for his arrest, which was then in the hands of the constable.

He seemed taken aback when he was first informed of this, but promising the squire he would be present at 1 o'clock that afternoon, to

undergo an examination, he departed. Word was sent to Gray to be present at the appointed time; and as the case was an unusual one, the room of the justice was crowded to hear the statements of the two.

Gray's story was short.

He swore that, having a wolf-trap set some distance out in the prairie, he had taken up his lodgings near by it the night of the fire, and about twelve o'clock he was aroused by the howls and snarls of a wolf, which had been caught in the trap. He arose to go to it, when he discovered a horseman near by, who dismounted from his steed, drew out a steel, flint, and tinder from his pocket, and striking a light, thrust it in the dry grass, which instantly blazed up, and, favored by a strong southern wind, sped away towards the settlement, and in the exact direction of Mr. Fisher's house. That the horseman, whom he recognized as Mr. Clyde, then mounted his horse, and rode away.

This statement had been listened to with breathless attention, and as Gray had delivered it apparently in a cool and truthful manner, it had considerable weight upon the audience. But it produced no effect upon David Clyde. The features of the young man were as calm as ever, and his countenance underwent no change during the recital of Gray. When the latter was done, he arose to his feet, and exclaimed:

"My statement of the facts, as they occurred upon the evening of that most deplorable fire, will be much more minute than that of my accuser, and will occupy more time; but I hope that not only the justice, but the audience also, will listen patiently to what I have to say. It is well known to many here that I have a brother residing in Walnut Grove, and upon the night of the fire I was returning from a visit to him. When about ten miles the other side of Mr. Fisher's, as I was riding leisurely along, I saw a man a short distance ahead of me, kneeling by the road-side, and apparently endeavoring to light a fire with a steel and tinder. I started my horse into a gallop, at the same instant giving a shout, and the man sprang to his feet, but dropped a burning lock of grass, as he did so, into the prairie, the dry hay of which was instantly in a blaze.

"'Scoundrel!' I exclaimed in a loud voice, as I came close to him; but with a coarse ha, ha, ha, he retorted—



"Don't be angry, Mr. Clyde, for getting mad won't stop the fire. I guess old Fisher'll catch it to-night, and his haughty daughter, too."

"Villain, you shall answer for this!" I replied, as I turned my steed, and spurred him after the rolling flames, which were sweeping swiftly away before a strong south wind, and rolling on in the direction of Fisher's house. In vain I urged my horse to his utmost speed, for the crackling fire sped far ahead of me, and when over a mile and a half distant, I beheld the lurid blaze leap the fence like a stag-hound, and go carcering on towards the house. Almost maddened at the sight, I goaded on my gallant horse, who bounded forward like the wind, but when still half a mile from the building, I saw a bright sheet of flame arise from the roof, and became aware that the house was on fire. The burning prairie had made it light as day, but my eye ran in vain around the premises to discover a single person, and the fearful thought flashed instantly through my mind that the family were asleep in the house. By the time I reached the door in front of the mansion, the roof was in lurid glare, and leaping from my steed, I let him go, and throwing my whole force against the door, burst it in. A dense volume of smoke poured out, almost suffocating me for a moment but regaining my breath, I ascended the steps to the second story. A door was visible upon my right hand as I reached the top, and it required all my weight to break it in; but when I did so, a female form staggered forward, and fell in my arms. I hastily bore her down the stairs, by this time covered with cinders from the burning roof, and as I leaped from the door it fell in with a terrible crash, showering the sparks thickly around me. The person I had rescued was Mary Fisher; and the old man and his wife perished in the flames. My horse had fled in alarm from the spot, and as the nearest neighbor's was four miles distant, we were compelled to walk it on foot. Day broke by the time we reached the house, and leaving the disconsolate girl at her neighbor's, I came immediately here, but found I was a few minutes too late to lay my accusation before you first. Such are the facts in the case; although they are almost exactly opposite to the statement made by Gray."

Clyde had delivered his story in an impressive and convincing manner, but the justice was

puzzled which of the two he should believe. The advantage lay with Gray, as he had made the first accusation, and the statement of Clyde might be only a tale invented to upset the evidence of his accuser. Neither had proof, as no one saw the deed, and the squire informed them that he knew of no way to dispose of the case impartially, unless he bound them both over to the court.

To this Gray strenuously objected. He had appeared and accused Clyde, he said, that the real author of the late catastrophe might be justly punished; and he thought that to bind them both over would have an effect in deterring others from making any accusations against malefactors from their own knowledge, unless they had positive proof of their guilt. He demanded that Clyde should be held to bail, and not himself.

When he had finished, Clyde once more got up, and turning to the justice, stated that as they both stood there without witnesses, and consequently it did not lay in his power to tell the guilty one, with his permission, and the consent of Mr. Gray, he would propose a plan by which he hoped the matter would be thoroughly settled. It was this:

"There is an Infinite Being, sir, who rules in a higher sphere than ours, and to whom all things are known, from whom nothing can be concealed. I propose to Mr. Gray, that we both make an appeal to Heaven, and let the God of the universe decide upon our guilt or innocence. I feel that I, sir, am not a malefactor here; and I challenge my accuser, in the presence of this audience, to accept my proposition."

Clyde ceased speaking, and amid an utter stillness, during which he became the centre of all eyes, Gray also arose, and replied:

"I will consent to do anything which the squire says is right."

"I can see no objection to Mr. Clyde's offer, although I do not suppose the case will be materially altered by it," said the justice.

"Then let him go on, and I will follow suit," brazenly answered Gray.

Slowly David Clyde fell upon bended knees, and raising his face and arms towards heaven, uttered, amid the most death-like silence, the following appeal:

"Eternal Being, thou who seest and knowest all things, and who only can tell the guilt of us



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two, into thy hands I commit my innocence, and beseech thee, Almighty God, if I am guilty of the crime of which I am accused, to strike me dead in the midst of this then most blasphemous appeal."

For full a moment after he had finished, Clyde remained upon his knees, then rose to his feet, and with folded arms, gazed slowly around him. The countenance of Gray had paled during the prayer of Clyde, but as every eye was upon him, he nerved himself to the task, moved forward, and also fell upon his knees; with a loud and hurried voice, he repeated the appeal, but when he came to the words "Almighty God, if I am guilty of the crime of which I am accused, to strike me dead," his face became more white, and he fell slowly forward.

The stillness which reigned at that awful moment was fearful. Not a sound could be heard in that room; and it seemed as if every breath was hushed, so deadly silent did every person appear. At last the justice, who bent forward with a horrified look to gaze upon Gray, motioned for a constable to approach, and turn over the body. He did so, and every eye which looked that way beheld the icy face of a corpse, and the livid hue of death resting upon the countenance of the blasphemer.

They bore forth the corpse, and buried it, silent and alone, in the prairie; and to this day the old farmers in the neighborhood shudder, as they recount to the passing traveler that fatal answer of "The Appeal to Heaven."